dissent

Spring 1973 $1.75

What Is "Post-industrial Society"?
Robert Heilbroner

Women's Liberation and Women Critics
Rose Laub Coser

George Meany's Finished World
Murray Hausknecht

Vietnam: Truce Without Peace
Joseph Buttinger

Angst-pushers and Austenites
David Bromwich

The Politics of Tightrope
Michael Harrington

The Left in Canada
Norman Penner

The New Conservatives: Intellectuals in Retreat
Joseph Epstein

Subversive Poems
Heberto Padillo

Higher Reaches of the Lower Orders: On B. F. Skinner
David Spitz

Freedom Victory in the UMW
H. W. Benson

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DISSENT, issued April 1, 1973, published quarterly, spring, summer, fall, and winter, by DISSENT Publishing Corporation, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Subscriptions: $7.00 for one year; $12.00 for two years; $5.00 for students for one year; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, add $1.00 for mailing costs per year. All payments from foreign countries must be made by United States money orders or checks payable in United States currency. Single copy, $1.75. For special rates on bulk orders from organizations, teachers, etc., write directly to DISSENT. For information on newsstand and bookstore distribution write to: Eastern News Co., 155 West Fifteenth Street, New York, N.Y. 10001.

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• Volume XX, Number 2 (whole No. 91).

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Heberto Padilla

Subversive Poems

Heberto Padilla, the Cuban poet, was arrested by the Castro government on March 20, 1971. He had in 1968 won an international prize for his book Fuera del Juego (Out of the Game), *sponsored by UNEAC (the Union of Cuban Writers and Artists), though the UNEAC soon announced its disapproval of the jury's verdict. Two weeks after Padilla's arrest he sent a confession of his "sins," Stalinist-style, which won his freedom a few weeks later; he then appeared at a public meeting in Havana urging heretical fellow writers, at least eight of whom, including his wife, he mentioned by name, to turn to the "right" attitudes. On May 20, 1971, a group of European and Latin-American writers, all supporters of the Castro revolution, wrote to express their "shame and anger" at the "pitiful text of the confession Heberto Padilla has signed," a text, they said, that "could have only been obtained by methods which are the negation of legality and revolutionary justice." Details of this incident, so damning for those intellectuals who have tried to argue that Cuba is "different" from other Communist regimes, can be found in José Yglesias's "The Case of Heberto Padilla,"* New York Review of Books, *June 3, 1971; for a critical comment on the intellectuals' statement, see "The Poet and the Dictator,"* DISSENT, *August 1971.*

Meanwhile, there remain the poems of Fuera del Juego. *We present here a number of these, with permission, translated by members of the Cuban Students Association at Georgetown University.*—ED.

Poetica

Say the truth.
Say, at the very least, your truth.
And later
let anything happen:
let them tear your cherished page,
let them stone your door down,
let the people
gather before your body
as if you were a prodigy or a dead man.

Translated by RAMÓN MESTRE

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In Hard Times

They asked him for his time
so that he join it to the time of History.
They asked him for his hands
because during hard times
there is nothing better than a good pair of hands.
They asked him for his eyes
that once had shed some tears
so that he could see the clear side
(especially the clear side of life)
for when it comes to horror
one single eye will do.

They asked him for his lips
—which were parched and dry—
so that they issue an affirmation
and with each affirmation build the dream
(the high dream).
They asked him for his legs
—which were knobby and hard—
because during hard times
is there anything better than a good pair of legs
for building or for trenches?

They asked him for the woods
that nourished him as a child
with its obedient trees.
They asked him for his chest, his heart, his shoulders.
They told him it was strictly necessary.
They explained to him later
that all these donations would be useless
unless he also surrender his tongue
because during hard times
nothing could be more useful
for stopping hatred or lies.
And finally they asked him politely
to start moving
because during hard times
this is, no doubt, the decisive test.

Translated by JORGE GUITART

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To Write in The Album of a Tyrant

Protect yourself from those who vacillate,
because one day they will know what they don't want.
Protect yourself from those who mumble,
Juan-the-stutterer, Pedro-the-mute,
because one day they shall find their strong voice.
Protect yourself from the timid and the frightened,
because one day they will not rise when you enter.

Translated by R. LEIVA

Instructions for Entering a New Society

First: optimism.
Second: to be handsome, careful
and obedient.
(To have passed all the physical fitness tests.)
And finally to move just like a
member: a step forward, and
two or three back:
but always applauding.

Translated by L. PÉREZ

The New Caesars Sing

We keep on building the Empire.
It is hard to build an empire
when you are yearning for all the innocence
in the world.
But it feels good to build it
as we do
with this loyalty, this political unity.
We have opened houses for the dictators
and avenues for their ministers
to be filled with great fanfare
the night they celebrate.
We have stables for the beasts of burden
and we have passed legislation
with the spontaneity of hangmen.
We are even moved by the sound
made by the doorbell
at the door of the moneylender.
We are still building this empire
exactly according to plan.
It will have its bishop and its whore
and of course a whole bunch of cops.

Translated by JORGE GUITART

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Ben Hillman

Nixon Wields the Hatchet

Washington

Listen to Richard Nixon describe his domestic policies: "They represent a pragmatic rededication to social compassion and national excellence. . . ." "Pragmatic" is the crucial word. We shall have compassion, if it is *practical.*

In the budget for fiscal 1974 we can see how policy translates into program. Although the budget proposes a $4.5 billion increase in defense spending, it would save between $8 billion to $10 billion in domestic expenditures by paring down or eliminating some 100 human welfare programs. Housing for low-, moderate-income, and rural families would be the principal casualties of an 18-month moratorium on new funds. Money for manpower training and employment of the disadvantaged—cut almost in half. Expenditures for education, though increased somewhat at the higher levels, would be reduced overall by about 4 percent. Federal aid to libraries—phased out. The Office of Economic Opportunity—to be shut down by June 30, its community-action program dropped and its other programs parceled out among the old-line agencies. Medicare beneficiaries would have to pay a larger share of their hospital costs. The school milk program—sharply reduced.

These proposals met with bitter condemnation in Congress and the press. It may be enough to quote Ralph Nader and 22 other public-interest advocates: "In a society already marred by a maldistribution of wealth and income," they said, "it is unjust to make the poor, poorer and the rich, richer. . . ."

By now the President's defenders are saying critics of the budget have overreacted. There will still be allocations for old-age benefits, education, and a range of social programs. "Can a $268.7 billion budget really be that bad?" one asks jocularly.

This defense of the President's proposals cannot be entirely ignored. Federal programs have often been duplicative and inefficient. Many are renewed reflexively by Congress because constituents have vested interest in them. They do need pruning and reevaluation —but not wholesale decimation. If their supporters have sometimes ignored their faults, one is not to suppose that, in calling for their reduction and elimination, President Nixon and his aides have studied all 100 carefully. Supporters of the affected programs have suggested they could be saved if the President were to cut defense spending and close tax loopholes that the AFL–CIO and Senator Edward Muskie estimate would yield an additional $18 billion in federal revenue. Such suggestions matter little if the truth is that Nixon doesn't like the programs.

It is typical of this Administration to put forth proposals for startling, even alarming changes and then suggest they are not as drastic as they sound. Four years have made us familiar with the Nixon style: first cuff and then soothe. The nomination of G. Harrold Carswell to the U.S. Supreme Court is followed by the offering of Blackmun and Powell, who shine so by contrast that they are quickly approved. The harrowing days of the bombing of Hanoi, that final, terrible wrench of the American conscience, is followed by a ceasefire that comes more as a relief than joy. The shifts on school desegregation are too many and complicated to be briefly chronicled, but it is fair to say that here, too, there has been an alternation between flagrant, infuriating indulgence of violators with some semblance of enforcement of the law. All these shifts have brought the government to where it is now: on the side, in court, of those fighting the constitutional requirements of the law and the

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Supreme Court school decisions; and in the forefront of the fight by either punitive legislation or constitutional amendment to stop school desegregation.

It is instructive, too, to recall how this Administration has dealt with the poor, how Nixon appeared at first as an advocate of sensible welfare reforms, proposing to substitute a guaranteed annual income for patchwork changes in an antiquated welfare system, and how quickly he jettisoned a compromise worked out by HEW Secretary Elliot Richardson and Senator Abraham Ribicoff when there was no longer any political mileage to be had from it in the 1972 election. One remembers how Nixon toyed with OEO, condemning it, threatening to abolish it during the 1968 presidential campaign; then in Don Rumsfeld and Frank Carlucci appointing directors seemingly in sympathy with its programs, and now, finally, moving to shut it down.

II

"THE MOST IMPORTANT THING," says a former HEW official discussing the budget, "is the sense throughout the government that priorities have been changed." It is almost as if, another official says, the President has wakened to the realization that he has only four more years in which to turn the country around (in whatever direction he has in mind) and now means to do so.

The wholesale resignations he demanded immediately after his election, in letters brutal and peremptory, were perhaps the first signal. Men Nixon considered antagonists were among the first to go, chief among them Father Theodore Hesburgh, the outspoken chairman of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. But some of Nixon's highly regarded administrators were forced to leave, too—people like Social Security Commissioner Robert M. Ball (who sinned, apparently, by mingling socially with liberal Republicans and members of the press) and Dr. Robert Q. Marston, head of the National Institutes of Health. Gone from the cabinet are the politicians like HUD's George Romney and Transportation's John Volpe, who had some sense of a constituency and its needs. Their successors are men who appear to share Nixon's view that many of their programs are boon-

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doggles, best cut back or kept in check until they can be turned over to the states.

More and more the agencies of the executive branch become the shadow of Richard Nixon. The man who cries, "It is time to get big government off your back and out of your pocket" shares the prejudices of those whose votes elected him, the suburbanites, the ethnics, the affluent. In their contempt for "welfare chislers" we find his loss of interest in welfare reform. In their fear of the encroaching minorities we can discern his disapproval of scatter-site housing for the poor and his opposition to school busing. It is their hatred of longhairs that he expresses when he speaks contemptuously of "two-year junkets" in the Peace Corps. And it is their distaste of government subsidies for black urban activists and for young hotshot lawyers fighting the battles of the poor that seems to move him to shut down OEO. In his constituents' anti-intellectualism may be the motive for abolishing the White House Science Adviser and two advisory bodies of scientists (Cambridge elitists, probably, opposed to the Vietnam war) and his downgrading of science and technology research to where its concerns are to be with practical short-range projects, capable of yielding good public relations. The attacks on the news media and the attempts to harass the press are probably Nixon's own idea, born of his conviction that reporters have tended to treat him badly. Since he is president, he both stimulates public prejudice and responds to it.

These prejudices crop up in the budget, too, not only in the rough treatment of major social programs but even in minor cuts. The last Congress gave Nixon its approval for $1.5 billion in Emergency School Aid, to help school districts that were under court or federal order to desegregate. This year the budget asks for $500 million for these purposes. The Federal Fair Housing Law of 1968 has long suffered from lax administration. Nothing in the budget seems calculated to improve the situation, for while the Defense Department is ready to spend $5.5 million to see that off-base housing is made available to the military without discrimination, HUD itself seeks only $4.3 million to enforce the law for the

(continued on page 241)

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DISSENT is a journal devoted to radical ideas and the values of socialism and democracy. It seeks to serve as a forum for writers devoted to these ideas and values, while also welcoming a wide variety of other opinions. Each writer speaks for himself; there is no effort made to exact editorial consensus or uniformity.

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SPRING 1973

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129 SUBVERSIVE POEMS
by Heberto Padilla

COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

132 NIXON WIELDS THE HATCHET
by Ben Hillman

137 VIETNAM: TRUCE WITHOUT PEACE
by Joseph Buttinger

142 POLITICIZING STATISTICS
by Eugene Keller

145 LEFT GAINS IN CANADA
by Norman Penner

148 FROM SRI LANKA

149 HARVEY SWADOS, 1920–1972
by Irving Howe

ARTICLES

151 THE NEW CONSERVATIVES: INTELLECTUALS IN RETREAT
by Joseph Epstein

163 ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF A "POSTINDUSTRIAL" SOCIETY
by Robert L. Heilbroner

177 THE FINISHED WORLD OF GEORGE MEANY
by Murray Hausknecht

183 THE POLITICS OF TIGHTROPE
by Michael Harrington

200 THE WHIP AND THE BEE: DIARY FROM THE GRAPE STRIKE
by Nicolaus Mills

NOTEBOOK

206 LABOR LEADERS, INTELLECTUALS, AND FREEDOM IN THE UNIONS
by H. W. Benson

210 PONTIAC: HOW PEOPLE RESPOND TO BUSING
by Nancy Hooyman and John Musick

217 LESS BREAD, MORE TAXES
by Joseph Diamond

MOVIES

219 ANGST-PUSHERS & AUSTENITES
by David Bromwich

BOOKS

224 REVIEWS *by Rose Laub Coser, Gerald Graff, and Robert W. Greene*

239 **IN THE MAGAZINES**

SPECIAL FEATURE

243 THE HIGHER REACHES OF THE LOWER ORDERS: A CRITIQUE OF B. F. SKINNER
by David Spitz

270 **LETTERS**

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Joseph Buttinger

Vietnam: Truce Without Peace

On October 26, 1972, Henry Kissinger informed the American people that after four years of negotiations and several months of secret talks, peace finally was "at hand." "We believe that an agreement is in sight, which is just to all parties." Kissinger added that something still had to be settled before the agreement could be signed, but these were "basically linguistic and technical details." Referring to a summary of the agreement broadcast by Radio Hanoi, Kissinger added that, on October 8, the North Vietnamese had for the first time made a proposal that broke the deadlock. "This proposal has been correctly summarized in the statements from Hanoi." In a speech delivered in Saginaw, Michigan, on October 28, President Nixon said: "Vietnam being over, we are proud of the fact that our trips to Peking and to Moscow have paved the way not just for ending this war but for a generation of peace."

According to Hanoi, the agreement, and Washington did not dispute its terms, was to be signed by the involved parties on October 31.

But, in fact, by the end of October, peace was by no means "at hand," and the Vietnam war was far from over. One of the most senseless and cruel episodes of the entire war took place during the months between the October agreement and the agreement finally ratified on January 27, 1973.

There is no need to guess why the hope for peace was thwarted in October. Under the pretext that a few issues had to be clarified in talks that could be concluded in a few more days, the United States "postponed" the signing of the agreement to which a few days earlier neither Kissinger nor Nixon had raised any substantive objections. They tried to maintain, prior to the presidential election, the image of Nixon as the man who would end the war—although they knew perfectly well that important provisions of the October agreement were unacceptable to Saigon. No doubt, to Nixon's embarrassment, Thieu did not wait until after the American election to make this clear.

The election over, increasingly forceful statements by Thieu made it evident that he had been permitted to veto the Washington-Hanoi agreement. Something now had to be done, not only to prevent the impression that the puppet had guided the master's hand, but also to prove that for Nixon the agreement concluded in October had not been primarily an election maneuver. For these reasons, the fact that peace was not "at hand" after the election had to be blamed on Hanoi. Nixon no longer talked about Vietnam "being over" but told members of Congress that "three major issues" of the October agreement had to be renegotiated. Hanoi, surprisingly conciliatory since the breakthrough of October 8, agreed to new negotiations. And so negotiations were resumed on November 20, recessed on November 25, were again taken up on December 4, only to break down on December 13 because of substantial disagreements over a cease-fire draft that in October Dr. Kissinger had called 99 percent complete. Three days later, Kissinger charged Hanoi with "procrastination" by forever raising new demands. But because Hanoi was then willing, as it had been ever since October, to sign the agreement,

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this Kissinger statement can be qualified as a distortion of the truth.

By order of President Nixon, bombing of North Vietnam was resumed on December 18, on a scale that dwarfed everything the U.S. had done during the entire war. Far from called for by exigencies of the war, this atrocious bombing was undertaken for purely diplomatic reasons, something for which it would be impossible to find an example in the entire history of warfare! In densely populated suburbs of Hanoi and Haiphong, as well as in smaller towns, several thousand civilians were killed or wounded. Whole districts of Hanoi, including schools, apartment houses, and the city's main hospital, were smashed to bits by a type of carpet bombing that surpassed most of the terror bombings of World War II. In this so-called search for peace the United States in one month threw almost as great a tonnage of bombs on Indochina as Hitler had dropped on the British Isles in nearly five years of war.

This terror bombing, as Tom Wicker wrote in the *New York Times* on January 14, was intended to show Hanoi "the extent of [Nixon's] anger over what the officials say he regarded as an eleventh-hour reneging on peace terms" —which, morally speaking, raises the question: what was worse, the bombing or the lies to justify it? Not only abroad but also in the United States, where governmental deception was practiced with frightening intensity during December 1972, even the most gullible admirers of Nixon knew that the peace effort was sabotaged by South Vietnam's Thieu. As *Le Monde* of Paris wrote on December 21: "If [Nixon] dared to go to the very end of his logic, he should now bomb Saigon."

It has been said that Nixon's feelings were hurt by the lack of "understanding" some influential newspapers and many of his countrymen showed for his methods of bringing about a cease-fire. But compared to the protests abroad, particularly in countries allied with the United States, the American voices raised against the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong at this stage of the peace negotiations can only be called feeble. There was evidence of a shocking indifference among the silent many and of a depressed conviction among the protesting few that nothing they might say or do would have the slightest effect on the one man whose decision brought death and destruction to the people of Vietnam. Tens of thousands demonstrated in every major city in Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and in Europe—not only in countries with strong Communist parties such as Italy and France, but also in Austria, England, Holland, and Sweden, where the Communists are much too weak to mobilize large crowds.

With few exceptions, the major European newspapers more or less agreed with *Le Monde,* which called the bombing an "abomination" and compared the "terror, blind murders, atrocious physical and psychological mutilations" to what Nazi Germany did in support of the Spanish Fascists to Guernica.

The mass demonstrations and the shocked reaction of the world press were accompanied by expressions of horror from dozens of statesmen not normally hostile to the United States. Condemnations were voiced by the governments of Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Australia, and New Zealand. Expressions of concern came from Austria, Finland, Belgium, and from Germany where after a demonstration of 20,000 in Bonn even Chancellor Willy Brandt felt compelled to add his cautious voice to the international chorus.

Italy's foreign minister was instructed by his government to "renew his insistence for the bombing to be stopped." The foreign minister of the Netherlands announced on December 28 his government's "protest against the flagrant violation of the best American tradition." The Canadian Parliament unanimously deplored the bombing, after the government let it be known that it had delivered four protests in Washington. The King of Sweden described the bombing as "merciless," and India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi expressed "horror" and called the bombing "savage."

Washington reacted only in one case, when the Swedish prime minister, the Socialist Olaf Palme, compared the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong with atrocities committed by the Nazis during World War II; but it kept silent when the Pope voiced "profound bitterness" at the "recent frightful exacerbation of the hostilities" and spoke of the "shocked reaction of the human—not to say Christian—conscience to the horrors of the tremendous new tragedy."

All over Europe, there were numerous other expressions of horror. In Italy the composers,

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led by Nono and Dallapiccola, issued a manifesto against the bombing. In Holland, 120 celebrities asked their government to recall its envoy to the United States if Washington did not stop its participation in the Indochina war; and the City Council of the Hague voted to keep the Dutch flag at the war-liberation monument at half-mast 15 minutes every day as long as the war lasted.

A note ominous for its wider political implication was struck by West German Minister of Finance Helmut Schmidt in a speech in the United States. There was a danger, Schmidt said, that continuation of the war might drive a wedge between the United States and its allies. Signs of such a danger could already be discerned from the tone in which two members of the Australian government spoke about American policy in Vietnam. Minister of Trade and Industry James F. Cairns called this policy one of "deceit and moral bankruptcy," while his colleague, Labor Minister Cameron, called the bombing an "act of virtual genocide" and demanded "economic pressure" on the United States to alter its policy, which he said seemed to be controlled by "maniacs."

In the United States, one could hear private expressions of disgust and shame, with remarks about the President it might not be civil to put into print. But no organized protest movement of any size developed, and among the altogether tame voices of protest in Congress only one was strong enough to attract attention. Surprisingly, it was that of a Republican, Senator William B. Saxbe of Ohio, who said that Nixon "must have lost his senses," adding, over-optimistically, that "all hell is going to break loose" unless the President soon made peace. In vain did one wait for a word of protest from those labor leaders who had helped Nixon gain his landslide victory. The least some of them might have said was that a free hand for wanton murder of thousands of Vietnamese civilians was not part of the mandate they had intended to give him.

II

IT WILL BE a long time before anyone outside the parties directly involved can say with certainty what led to the cessation of the bombing above the 20th parallel on December 29, to the resumption of the Paris peace talks on January 8, and to the conclusion of an agreement on January 13, initialed by Dr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho on January 23, and formally signed on January 27. That heavy losses of aircraft had something to do with ending the bombing might sound plausible to those who believe Hanoi's claim of having downed 76 planes, of which 33 were said to be the expensive B-52s. The losses Washington admitted were 15 B-52s, 12 other aircraft, and 93 pilots, a loss U.S. military sources called "about satisfactory" and even "a mite lower than what we expected"—a not very surprising opinion in view of the fact that total losses since 1961 were 8,500 aircraft, 2,000 crewmen killed, 1,236 missing and 527 captured by the North Vietnamese. In terms of money, the losses during the 11 days of intensified raids amounted to $168 million, which, for the military who had spent over $10 billion on the air war in Indochina, must also have been "satisfactory."

The bombing halt of December 29 had nothing to do with military considerations. The reasons for it, like those that had prompted Nixon to go along with Thieu's rejection of the October agreement, were purely political. To make new talks possible, both sides had to hold out the promise of concessions, which, in negotiations that lasted only a few days, led to the final agreement of January.

Ever since the beginning of October 1972, it has been increasingly evident that Hanoi and the Vietcong considered it possible to make the concessions Nixon needed for a settlement compatible with his notion of "honor and justice." Chiefly by dropping their demand that the Thieu regime be replaced by one in which the National Liberation Front would be represented, Hanoi and the Vietcong obtained the agreement of October 8. No more conclusive proof could be offered that this agreement was advantageous for the Communist side than the vigor with which it was rejected by Thieu. For this reason, and possibly also because he felt that too much had been conceded to the enemy, Nixon refused to honor what Kissinger had agreed upon.

When Hanoi refused to make all the concessions with which Nixon tried to gain Thieu's consent to a cease-fire, the U.S. started the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong, reportedly against Kissinger's advice—since he may have known that some concessions from Hanoi could

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still be obtained through negotiations. If Nixon thought otherwise, this was surely not because he knew better than Kissinger what concessions might still be won. The bombing of the North while Hanoi agreed to and Saigon rejected the cease-fire negotiated by Kissinger and Le Duc Tho was an essential requirement of Nixon's concept of "peace with honor"—*a peace seemingly brought about through such application of American power that the enemy's only choice was acceptance of whatever demands Washington raised.* Once Nixon could claim that his bombing had forced Hanoi to resume negotiations and submit to his conditions, he felt free to use whatever pressure was needed to make Thieu accept the cease-fire thus obtained. And the amount of pressure needed to bring Thieu in line can be measured by the fact that Washington had to threaten, through statements by two prowar and pro-Thieu senators (Barry Goldwater and John C. Stennis), to cut off all aid if Saigon continued to oppose the agreement.

ON January 15, President Nixon ordered a halt of all bombing, shelling, and mining of Vietnam north of the 17th parallel. On January 24, the White House made public the text of the cease-fire agreement, together with the four protocols dealing with the means of carrying it out.

Its main provisions were: The cease-fire was to go into effect throughout Vietnam on January 27, at 7:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. All Americans involved in combat, military and civilian, were to be withdrawn within 60 days of the signing of the agreement. During the same 60 days, all American prisoners of war were to be turned over to American authorities, the first to be released within 15 days. An international commission disposing of a force of 1,160 men consisting of troops from Canada, Hungary, Indonesia,, and Poland, was to supervise all aspects of the agreement, especially the release of prisoners, troop withdrawals, and the somewhat ambiguously projected elections in South Vietnam. Pending these elections, for which no date was set in the agreement, the government of President Thieu was to remain in office. A National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord, consisting of members of the South Vietnamese government and of Communists and neutralists, was to supervise the elections. About the estimated 145,000 North Vietnamese troops in the South the agreement, *just like the one of October 8,* remained silent. But military movements across the demilitarized zone between North and South Vietnam as well as the use of force to bring about the reunification of the country were to be prohibited.

In a Paris press conference on January 24, Le Duc Tho called the agreement a "great victory for the Vietnamese people," claiming that it is "basically the same" as the draft agreed upon in October. A somewhat more sober Dr. Kissinger, in a press conference the same day in Washington, stated that the goals of the United States had been "substantially achieved." Both men, if not entirely wrong, seriously distorted what the agreement meant. Compared with the October draft, which stated that "detained personnel of the parties" shall be returned, Hanoi had agreed to a formula which meant that the political prisoners in Thieu's jails and concentration camps, estimated by some at no less than 200,000, are not to be released during the 60-day period during which all prisoners of war are to be released. These prisoners are to remain an object of bargaining between Thieu and the Vietcong. This, however, is the only major concession made by Hanoi between October 1972 and January 1973.

True, from the agreement emerges the fact that there is a political entity called South Vietnam; but Article I of the agreement stipulates that the U.S. respects not only the sovereignty but also the "unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam as recognized by the 1954 Geneva Agreement on Vietnam." To make this perfectly clear, Article 15 repeats, quoting from the Geneva Agreement, that "the military demarcation line between the two zones at the 17th parallel is only provisional and not a territorial boundary."

Since the object pursued by Washington ever since 1954 had been to secure the existence of a separate anti-Communist state in a territorially divided Vietnam, the goals of the United States, far from being "substantially achieved," are, after a war that will forever remain a disgrace for America, even farther from being realized than they were at any time since 1954.

In 1954 no Communist military units were allowed to remain below the 17th parallel; with American support, a policy of systematic de-

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struction of their local strongholds was pursued all over South Vietnam. The new agreement leaves not only all Vietcong military units intact and masters of the territory they controlled at the end of January, but it also lacks any provision for either an immediate or gradual withdrawal of the 145,000 North Vietnamese soldiers still in the South. Furthermore, Article 11 of the agreement ensures "the democratic liberties for the people: personal freedom, freedom of organization, freedom of political activities, etc."—all of which Thieu had to suppress in order to remain in power. If all these freedoms become a reality, the rule of Thieu will come to an end.

No one knows this better than Thieu himself. His belligerent speeches have at all times made it clear that he will do all he can to counteract the political stipulations of the agreement. Nixon's veto of the October draft enabled Thieu not only to postpone as long as possible the release of his political prisoners, but it also gave him three months in which to sabotage the impending agreement. According to reliable reports from Saigon, during these months no less than 40,000 critics and merely suspected enemies of the Thieu regime were arrested all over the South. Many who tried to resist arrest were shot on the spot. Not only were those arrested who were suspected of disseminating Communist propaganda, but anyone, too, who tried to return to a home village located in a Vietcong-controlled area. This policy, Thieu stated on January 22, will continue to be pursued after the cease-fire is in effect.

What makes the "peace" so terribly fragile is the bitter political struggle between the Thieu regime and its opponents, Communists and others, which may well lead to a resumption of the war within a few months.

THE difficult compromises that made the cease-fire possible produced an ambiguity of language that enables the two sides to interpret some provisions of the agreement in different ways. This will no doubt lead to prolonged bitter discussions before a showdown becomes inevitable. But it also means that the United States, although its retreat from the war seems the only relatively certain result of the cease-fire, still has to discharge some definite responsibilities if the war is to end in 1973. Some of these responsibilities relate to Laos and Cambodia; but politically speaking, Vietnam remains the place where the decision between war and peace for all Indochina will be made. Unless provoked by systematic sabotage of the agreement by Saigon, Hanoi is unlikely to make a military move aiming at a united Communist-dominated Vietnam. It is to Hanoi's advantage to wait. Not only Hanoi, but Moscow and Peking, too, will now expect Washington to pressure Thieu to release all political prisoners, to allow the many prominent exiles to return home, and to put into effect the liberties provided for in the agreement—all of which, obviously, amounts to dropping Thieu.

For these reasons alone, it would seem premature for American opponents of the war to rejoice in "piece achieved" and to join those who in order to forget the war quickly try or pretend to regard the entire episode as a national "tragedy" commonly to be regretted. Our duty, rather, is to search for the deeper causes of this dismal episode in the history of the United States, to fix individual responsibilities, and to analyze the reasons for the national obsession with a war that has been a disaster not only for Indochina but also for the United States.

At this moment it is quite impossible to predict in what manner and at what time the struggle for political control of South Vietnam will be resolved. I am inclined to agree with Donald Kirk, for many years an astute observer of the Indochina scene, who wrote in the *New Leader* of December 25, 1972: "In the end, unless the scenario holds some surprises now impossible to see, North Vietnam really will win it all."

Perhaps it will not be long before most Americans realize that such an outcome was in fact the only peace Nixon could achieve after a war that should never have been fought.

February 2, 1973 □

To Our Contributors

- When sending manuscripts, please make sure that you do not send your only copy.
- And please also be sure to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. —THE EDITORS

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Eugene Keller

Politicizing Statistics

Somewhere in *The Other America,* Michael Harrington conjures up the image of the federal highway system bypassing city slums and the rural poor, speeding on the affluent traveler undisturbed by the marks of struggle for a daily living. Not that he would necessarily be a better man were he compelled to use congested city streets and two-way country roads. But questions might remain to disturb him who time and again witnesses poverty and degradation. The highway providing efficient connection between suburban home and downtown office relieves the traveler from unsettling sights and helps make invisible those whom he would rather forget.

The statistics issued by federal agencies have become somewhat like the federal highway system: they enable business and government to plan their activities ever more efficiently, but they are increasingly designed so as to make poverty and the struggle for a living less visible. Secretary of the Treasury George Shultz is reported to have said in a recent radio-TV interview that we shouldn't be concerned so much with the unemployment statistics, and rather look at the human reality behind them. But so to view social statistics is to misconstrue their purpose. The *dimensions* of the human reality of unemployment cannot be known without collecting, compiling, and analyzing the pertinent data. To belittle the statistics as not representative of reality is to deny that they are an indispensable element of social knowledge. Without the generalizing tendency inherent in the statistical data, we will not know what kind and how much effort is needed to change the "human reality" of unemployment. Thus, to minimize the importance of statistics is to make that reality less visible.

To speak of the "politicization" of government statistics would seem at first blush meaningless. Statistical programs are central to the planning processes of all industrial countries, especially to those of the United States where decision-making power is relatively dispersed. They cannot be, and as a rule are not, permitted to become suspect. They are directed and compiled by large, highly trained professional and technical staffs who owe their standing more to the judgment of their peers than to their employers, and usually will try to resist the distortion or misuse of their work. The federal government currently spends nearly $300 million a year on statistical programs. They are complex, rigidly standardized, and often sustained by vocal user groups, which, where public bodies are involved, often depend for their funding upon what the data indicate. Private groups require statistics from known impartial sources to gauge the costs and extent of their present and planned activities, or the reasonableness of claims (as in the case of collective bargaining).

Social and economic statistics thus seem to be merely apolitical instruments of bureaucratic planning and contractual arrangements. So they are; but they have other, less reassuring qualities. They possess, let us say, heuristic value. They lend themselves to raising questions about the status quo preferred by private and public bureaucracies. They can be interpreted, where appropriate, as pointing to basic flaws in the social and economic system, and they can be used to strengthen arguments for radical change. This aspect of statistical programs has probably at times led to prevention of their preparation or dissemination.

The discontinuance, since December 1971, of unemployment statistics for the low-income neighborhoods of central cities is a case in point. In these neighborhoods unemployment ran to 12.4 percent of the resident labor force in 1971, more than twice the rate for whites residing in the nonpoverty areas of these cities. Such data represent mere planning indicators for public manpower agencies (and manpower planning was the rationale for Congress to fund the collection of these statistics). Whatever the benefits of manpower planning and programs for individuals, the unemployment rate for urban blacks has shown no improvement relative to that for whites. Such lack of improvement raises a widening circle of questions, involving not merely the effect of the programs or the labor markets that discriminate against blacks from the inner city—but ultimately about the whole complex of low-wage, low-status employment, without tenure rights or significant

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fringe benefits, which a large proportion of blacks and other minority people are compelled to accept. The very structure of society, presumably affluent and equipped with a highly productive technology, is put in question by the knowledge of such conditions. Whether statistics about these conditions add new knowledge may be debatable; but assuming that they are basically reliable, they quantify and summarize the facts, and *lend them authority*. Withdraw the data collection and dissemination programs, and all knowledge about such conditions as that of the urban poor is deprived of generality. The problem festers, but its visibility becomes obscured.

The reason given for the discontinuance of the collection program for urban unemployment data was that the selection of geographical areas had been based on the "outdated" 1960 Census. Data from the 1970 Census, however, have been available since late fall 1971. So far, the effort to collect the quarterly data regularly has not been resumed.

The obscuring of poverty has led to an expunging of the very term from the official language; it is now replaced by "low income." A family of four living on less than $4,137 in 1971, is no longer "poor"; it lives below the "low-income" level. Nor does it dwell in a poverty neighborhood, but in "low-income" areas. (By this definition, 29 percent of all black families and 8 percent of all white families were poor in 1971.)[1]

Such changes in terminology minimize the problem, and not only in the minds of philistines. Living on a "low income" seems less outrageous than living in poverty.

THE HIGH COST and prominence of major statistical programs usually make their outright suppression infeasible. Their value, however, is deflated and their evaluation made more difficult when analysis is withheld. Statistical data are in fact nearly useless unless the concepts informing them are made explicit, and a framework of verbal explication and interpretation is provided. A striking case in point has been the manner in which the Census Employment Survey (CES) has been "presented" to the public. The CES is a vast compilation of data on the social and economic characteristics of nearly 9 million youths and adults residing in the "low-income" areas of 51 cities and 8 rural areas in 1970. The Survey, initiated years ago by Willard Wirtz, then secretary of labor, was conducted as part of the 1970 Census, and published in 76 volumes in January 1972. Dealing with some of the main features of the CES, an article in the *New York Times Magazine* of November 5, 1972,[2] points out that ". . . the Administration has chosen not to analyze the numbers or even to calculate the simplest indexes of economic well-being for these 51 cities." The authors believe that the CES findings "should eventually lead to better solutions than welfare or income maintenance and should in the long run contribute substantially to the nation's overall prosperity." But there is nothing in the attitude of the Administration, eloquently expressed by its silence on those findings, to encourage such a belief—quite aside from the persistence of poverty itself, indicated by the CES and the many less comprehensive surveys that preceded it.

The vitiation of politically "sensitive" data has not been limited to the Nixon administration. *Health, Education and Welfare Trends,* an annual compendium of a wide range of statistics and text, disappeared, together with its monthly edition, *Health, Education and Welfare Indicators,* by early 1967, a few years after having been first issued. The hopes of many liberals linked with the expansion of Great Society programs were dashed by the Vietnam war; and those compendia became a factor leading to intensified claims for more encompassing social programs.

True, the body of data from which *Trends* and *Indicators* drew were—and are—available. But while available to those in need of technical information, they are not *accessible* to those in search for social knowledge—educa-

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[1] *The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States, 1971* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, July 1972). The term "low income" first replaced "poverty" in the issue of this publication for 1970 (see especially page 35). The comparable issue for 1969 still called poverty by its name.

[2] "Crisis of the *under*employed—in much of the inner city 60% don't earn enough for a decent standard of living." By William Spring, Bennett Harrison, and Thomas Vietoricz.

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tors, legislators, journalists, students. Such people would not be what they are were they to be specialists. The absence of relevant statistical compendia has the same effect as the absence of an informative daily newspaper—access to a universe of knowledge and to participation in public life is foreclosed.

The "politicization" of official statistics denotes a more far-reaching process than the mere over- or underplay of momentarily "favorable" or "unfavorable" data. The process is invariably hidden from public view, and definite proof of political influence can never be adduced. A recent congressional report, titled *Investigation of Possible Politicization of Federal Statistical Programs* (Subcommittee on Census and Statistics of the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, House of Representatives, October 5, 1972) reads more like a Kafkaesque novel than a serious inquiry. It deals *inter alia* with the cancellation of the monthly press-briefings on the unemployment rate and the Consumer Price Index, which had been held for 20 years and conducted by high-level civil service statisticians..

The cancellation followed what appeared as a minor incident at the time: a decline in the January 1971 unemployment rate of 0.2 percent, greeted as of "great significance" by the secretary of labor, was characterized as being but "marginally significant" by one of the assistant commissioners of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. But this clash in interpretation—inadvertently precipitated by the civil servants involved—was not given as the reason for discontinuing the briefings. This was done, according to a subsequent statement by the secretary of labor, in the interest of speedier availability of the data without such briefings, and in the interest of consistency with the practice of other federal agencies, whose release of data was not accompanied by press briefings; and this was to relieve civil servants "from having to respond to inquiries that call for policy response." (See the Report, page 7.) Washington journalists, however, know that civil servants eschew replies to policy-directed inquiries, although they are of course aware of the policy implications of their work; that is a reason for their devotion to it.

Here, again, was an attempt to lower the visibility of a major indicator of social welfare. The Report states that "with the passage of time, interest in and the necessity for the press briefings has declined dramatically. Members of the press who formerly attended the briefings were generally consistent in their feelings that there was no great loss as a result of the discontinuance of the briefings" (page 7). But as Eileen Shanahan pointed out in the *New York Times* (October 22, 1972), only three of the (nine) reporters interviewed by the committee staff regularly report on economic statistics, and these three evidently thought that the briefings had been of importance. The Report, Miss Shanahan held, "contains many of the earmarks of a whitewash." Although the Report indicates that all persons interviewed expressed suspicion about the cancellation of the press briefings, it concluded that there was no evidence of political pressure on the preparation and dissemination of data. The heart of the matter is that the impact of the unemployment statistics on public opinion and the resultant pressures on public officials is lessened when a hitherto major channel of statistical analysis and explication is closed.

WE HAVE DESISTED from charging that statistical data have actually been suppressed. (The discontinuance of the report on the size distribution of personal income, presented annually in the *Survey of Current Business* until April 1965, appears to have been an outstanding case of outright suppression, although the basic data continue to be available in Census releases. See the Note on page 28 of the April 1965 *Survey*.) But it is not necessary actually to suppress statistical data that might be politically damaging. All that is necessary is to make them less accessible or, in Eileen Shanahan's words, ". . . to make it nearly impossible for any layman to detect even the most elementary truths."

While generated by the planning and research requirements of new or ongoing programs (social security, unemployment insurance, wage legislation), statistics tend to take on a life of their own, and intensify as well as broaden the concerns to which they are addressed. This process is aborted when they are not presented in meaningful form, e.g., through analytical tables, indexes, textual explication, etc.—and when they are not actively disseminated through

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the press and relevant compendia. Otherwise, "freedom of information," while formally preserved (no one can charge that the data are being "suppressed"), becomes an empty shell. The data exist, but become nonfacts. The problems they portray persist, but consciousness of them recedes. □

Norman Penner

Left Gains In Canada

Toronto

On October 31, 1972, the Canadian electorate surveyed what it had just done at the polls and found itself with a hangover—literally. No party had a majority of seats. With the threat of another election hanging over the new parliament, the results ushered in a period of political uncertainty.[1]

All opposition parties gained at the expense of the Liberals, yet it took only a small shift in the popular vote to bring about this change. The heaviest Liberal defeats were suffered in the four western provinces where the Liberals lost 75 percent of their seats and dropped an average of 10 percentage points in the popular vote. In the three prairie provinces this confirmed a long-term trend that has reduced the Liberal party to an almost negligible factor among western farmers. The Conservatives and the NDP now dominate the West, and future political contours of that huge region will be determined for a long time to come by the contest between these two parties.

The Liberal party maintained its strength in Quebec, since the beginning of the century the key to its dominance in federal politics. Although it lost 4 percentage points in this vote, it kept 56 seats out of a possible 74. The Conservatives, on the other hand, by electing only two members in Quebec, one of them English, have demonstrated again that they are an insignificant factor among French-Canadian voters.

The Conservatives registered their biggest and most important gains in Ontario. During the past four elections, Tory fortunes had slipped badly in what was once their main base in Canada. They even had been completely frozen out of their onetime "solid south"—Toronto. Now in 1972 they went from 17 seats to 41 in Ontario, with six seats in Toronto.

The election showed deep divisions in the country. Many Conservative votes in Ontario and the West came from an anti-French backlash. Some Tory candidates insinuated that Trudeau's program of bilingualism in the civil service was an attempt to force everyone in Canada to learn and speak French. There was also a backlash against the federal government's welfare and unemployment insurance program, which appeared to many middle-class voters as handouts to the lazy, the hippies, and scheming housewives. There also was dissatisfaction with the government's economic policies, which had failed to check mounting inflation and unemployment. The voters were obviously dissatisfied over a whole range of questions, but the indecisive result shows that none of the alternatives was attractive enough.

The Liberals campaigned under the slogan "The Land is Strong" which became ever more ludicrous as figures from the government itself showed a rapid increase in unemployment and the cost of living. Trudeau has now confessed that this slogan was a mistake. During the campaign he refused to discuss anything else, trying simply to repeat his 1968 performance, when he merchandised the sole advantage of his charisma. That did not work in 1972.

The Conservatives attacked explicitly on some problems, and on riskier issues, such as the French question, they resorted to innuendo. But they had no positive platform of their own.

The NDP (New Democratic Party) cam-

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[1] The results showed a substantial loss for the Liberals under Pierre Trudeau, who had first led them to a solid victory in 1968:

	1968	1972
	SEATS	SEATS
Liberals	155	109
Conservatives	72	107
New Democrats (NDP)	21	31
Social Credit	14	15
Others	2	2
	264	264

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paigned on the issue of tax concessions and dodges, which allow the big corporations to get away with paying far too small a share of the national revenues. When this isue was first raised, it got so much publicity that NDP leader David Lewis dropped everything else. He thus missed an opportunity of presenting some of the clear proposals the NDP did have in its platform.

THIS IS NOT the first time Canada has had a minority government. In the last seven elections since 1957, five have resulted in no single party having a majority. By now minority government has become the norm and majority rule the exception in Canadian federal politics. What is new about *this* minority government is that its continued existence depends on the NDP, which, for the first time, holds the balance of power. What is also new is that the Conservatives have almost as many seats as the Liberals and therefore could conceivably form a government in the event of a Liberal defeat in the House.

All this presents the NDP with a challenge and a danger. The NDP and its predecessor, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), have sent a small but highly effective group to Parliament since 1935. But while it is now the government in three of the four western provinces the NDP never before has had an opportunity to *visibly* influence national policies in the federal House. It did influence national policies in the past, but either the Liberals or the Conservatives, whichever was in power, got the credit for measures it initiated.

The danger now is two-fold. One is that of being made to look like a wing of the Liberal party, which would surely undermine the *raison d'être* of the NDP as a radical, if not socialist, alternative. The other danger is that the Liberals, instead of relying on the NDP to keep it in power, could move to the right and form a government with the Conservatives.

So far it appears that the Liberals are relying on NDP support. The Throne speech, announcing government intentions at the first session of Parliament, presented a comprehensive program of reforms greeted by Lewis as indicating that "the existing Government is prepared to introduce laws which could be of considerable benefit to the people of Canada." In fact the speech contained so many goodies that a number of commentators have remarked that if Trudeau had made the same proposals during the elections, he probably could have won a majority.

But so far the Throne speech is just a catalogue of intentions. The exact legislation comes later, if it comes at all. Still, even this catalogue, seen in the best possible light, has conspicuous omissions that ought to bother a socialist.

There is no mention of ending the corporate tax rip-off which Lewis had made his main campaign issue, nor of reducing the tax burden on the low-wage and salary earner. There is no indication of what fiscal measures, if any, the government will take to reverse its past policies that increased both unemployment and inflation. There is no mention of any steps to limit or check the take-over of Canadian companies by U.S. monopolies, or to slow down the drift to "continentalism," which Liberal policies have promoted for many years.

David Lewis, it is true, may feel freer than before to compromise on important issues of Canadian-U.S. relations, now that he has rid the party of the troublesome "Waffle," a unique and once powerful caucus within the NDP, dedicated to merging socialism with Canadian nationalism, and to making the NDP more socialist and more nationalist.

The Waffle (a designation humourously given by a reporter) came into being in 1969 with a manifesto signed by 144 party activists including MPs, academics, unionists, and party organizers. Surveying the growing domination of Canada by U.S. imperialism, it stated that the main body of the Canadian bourgeoisie was actively engaged in integrating the Canadian into the American economy. It then concluded that the Canadian capitalist class had abdicated whatever claim it ever had to being the leader of the nation, and therefore any genuine movement to rescue the nation must be anticapitalist. There was in this manifesto a strong current of implied Marxism, which seemed to revive, under contemporary conditions, the Marxism that had been one of the elements in the original CCF program but had been gradually dropped in the Cold War years.

The Waffle was an instant hit. Its leader was

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Mel Watkins, a brilliant young economist who had done special assignments for the Liberal government and become convinced, while on these assignments, that the government's policies were a betrayal of Canadian independence. His speeches as Waffle leader were front-page news for three years. Another Waffler, Jim Laxer, ran against David Lewis for the leadership of the NDP and got more than two-thirds of the vote Lewis received. The Waffle had no desire to take over the party but saw the vote as a test, and an impressive one, of the acceptance of Waffle ideas within the NDP. During elections NDP candidates who were Waffle adherents conducted enthusiastic campaigns, attracting hundreds of young people. The Waffle also carried on widespread educational activities both in and beyond the NDP. It also supported the right of Quebec to self-determination, and established links with nationalist and socialist groups in Quebec.

David Lewis, his son Stephen who is the leader of the Ontario NDP, and several important trade union leaders decided to call a halt to these activities. They presented an ultimatum to the Waffle: either dissolve all formal organizational activities, accept the existing rules for caucuses within the party, or be thrown out. A majority of the Waffle decided to leave the NDP and to form a group called the Waffle Movement For An Independent Socialist Canada. While not a party, it clearly has the intention of becoming one. The rest opted to stay in the NDP and to form a Left caucus, advocating a more socialist emphasis but abiding by the rules of the party.

Outside the NDP, however, Waffle looks a lot different than inside. Inside it was part of a viable anticapitalist force that has reached a new level of effectiveness in Canadian politics. Outside the NDP, the Waffle is just one more of a dozen or so small revolutionary sects, each claiming to be the sole upholder of Marxist truth.

While it momentarily frees David Lewis in his negotiations with the Liberal party, the removal of Waffle from the NDP does not mean he can go too far. Even within the NDP caucus in Parliament there is already some restiveness over the idea of helping the Liberals stay in power for an indefinite period. Despite Lewis's playing down the independence issue, opposition to U.S. domination is more likely to express itself through the NDP than through any other party, and this must bring the NDP into sharp conflict with the Liberals who are widely and correctly regarded as the party of continentalism. There is no possibility, even under a minority government, for the Liberals to substantially change direction on this question. They could conceivably bring in again their weak foreign take-over bill.[2] But now the NDP could not easily modify the trenchant criticism it had leveled at the time against the proposed act as ineffectual.

Though it won ten additional seats, the NDP did not increase its percentage of the popular vote, which remains around 18 percent. But its union vote is going up, calculated at about 30 percent. It is increasing its vote in the big metropolitan centers, Toronto, Vancouver, and even Montreal. It has a big role to play in articulating forthright solutions to problems that weigh on low- and middle-income Canadians. It can best undertake this role, not by suppressing the Left within its ranks, but by listening to criticism that comes from that quarter. On the other hand, one hopes that the left in the NDP will not repeat the mistakes of the Waffle and of many Marxists in the past—an impatience with history and a sectarian insistence on sacred dogmas—and that they will see the NDP, with all its weaknesses, as the authentic political expression of Canadian radicalism.

The NDP unites large sections of the labor movement with important segments of the western farm movement. Weak in Quebec, it may never succeed in that province as an NDP, but could work with whatever becomes the radical equivalent there.

The uncertain atmosphere on Parliament Hill reflects a long-term process, described some time ago by one of the leading NDP intellectuals, Professor Charles Taylor, as the breakdown of consensus politics, long acclaimed as the genius of the Canadian political party system. According to the theory of consensus politics, parties arrived through a process of bargaining at a consensus that represented the

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[2] The bill stipulates that before a Canadian firm can be taken over by a foreign-owned corporation, the prospective buyer must satisfy a government screening agency that the take-over is in the best interests of Canada.

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broadest compromises to be reached between the contending forces. As politicians became brokers, all parties sought to occupy not the Left or the Right of the political spectrum, but the Center.

Taylor shows how this "brokerage" system swept under the rug important issues, neglected large sections of the population—the politically inarticulate—and never involved the poor, the native Indians and Eskimos, and similar groups in the political process.

The issues of welfare, Canadian independence, French-English relations, can no longer be handled by little compromises. The NDP, according to Taylor, must become an agency of polarization rather than another force promoting consensus. In the volatile political climate of Canada, this is the challenge facing the NDP. There is a real opportunity to expand its influence beyond the plateau it has now reached. □

Letter

From Sri Lanka

An attempt by its government—a coalition of left-nationalists and Trotskyists (LSSP)—to muzzle the press has plunged the six-month-old Republic of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) into the first crisis under its strange new Constitution.

This Constitution established the Supreme Court, which is to advise the elected National Assembly whether proposed legislation will be in conflict with the Constitution. A bill to control the press, recently introduced by the government, was accordingly referred to the Court at the demand of the opposition (the United National party), the civil rights movement, and other groups. The petitioners alleged that the Bill contravenes freedom of the press which is guaranteed by the new Constitution, and that newspapers now will be subject to a government-dominanted "press council." A provision of the Press Bill making it an offense to publish a false statement about any proposal is under consideration by the government. Such a provision is calculated to inhibit even the publication of truthful news (to admit to a *bona fide* mistake is no defense); it puts a journalist in the dilemma of having to reveal his source of information or go to jail. The petitioners also claim that the Bill offends the principle of equality before the law, because government publications are immune from its provisions.

The Court failed to conclude its hearings within the 14-day period mentioned in the new Constitution, which it ruled was not an obligatory provision but merely a standard toward which to aspire. The speaker of the National Assembly, however, thought otherwise and announced that the Court had defaulted in its duty, and that the National Assembly could proceed to debate the Press Bill.

In a brief announcement, the Court's president, T. S. Fernando (also president of the International Commission of Jurists), said that the judges were bound to uphold the new Constitution according to their understanding of it and that any other course of action would be an abdication of their duty. Enraged by this action, government supporters in the National Assembly abused the judges, and government spokesmen even called the speaker to bar the judges physically from the committee room of the National Assembly where the Court was sitting.

Most alarming for the future of democratic institutions in Sri Lanka, however, was the revelation on the floor of the Assembly by the minister of justice that he, personally, had telephoned the judges to suggest they ask the speaker for an extension of time and that a midnight meeting of the president of the Republic, the judges, the minister of justice, and the speaker had taken place at which this suggestion was renewed. The Constitution provides for no such procedure and the judges, naturally, had rejected this face-saving proposal.

According to reports in the international press early in February, a majority of the judges have voted that the proposed press law is in conflict with the Constitution; subsequent developments are anyone's guess. □

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Harvey Swados

1920–1972

The following text was delivered at a memorial meeting held in New York City.

Harvey Swados is a man with a white beard, full-figured, handsome as the very devil, a writer with novels, stories, essays behind him. Beaming with a child's delight, he shows us his new house in Chesterfield, a wonderful old house, notched with the weight of generations yet already bearing the marks of his own pleasures. It's a place where you encounter a variable number of Swadoses, people laughing, quarreling, shouting, working. Harvey tells me with a grin, knowing how to incite a city boy's imagination, that in Chesterfield you can go snowshoeing, across the meadows behind the house. Somewhere in his mind a new book is gathering, but it's not yet close, and he doesn't mean to hurry it. By now we're both older, says Harvey, and like to think that we've learned there's no longer the need we used to feel for hurrying; we can stop a little and rest in the support of the moment; the world will take notice or it won't, and we'll go on. We talk about our children, making certain that our boasts have an edge of wryness to them, since it would not be proper to seem merely paternal. The evening is nothing special, a brief pleasant visit, we're not really intimate, just old friends whose lives have intertwined for decades . . .

It begins some thirty years earlier in Buffalo, where the socialist group to which we both belong is building a new branch. Its members in Buffalo are young, mostly students going into factories, excited by this venture into what they regard as the reality of things. One of them is Harvey: rosy, cheerful, serious, a young man not yet fully formed. I come to visit, and later we talk about politics, our first but by no means last quarrel, and more shyly, we edge into literature, though I have no idea he may be dreaming about becoming a novelist. Some quality of directness, a moral freshness and transparency strikes one about him. Today I remember after that first meeting using in my mind a slang word about Harvey that was already out of fashion. He's a fellow, I thought to myself, "with moxie." Half a lifetime later I find myself regretting that I never told him about that, since I can see his quick amusement, his characteristic explosion of vitality softening into reflectiveness, and his teasing reply, "Say, that was one of your better critical judgments."

The socialist group from which we came was a curious one, still carrying the portentousness of Bolshevik vocabulary but moving toward a more open-spirited and problematic outlook; determined to sink roots in the life of the American working class but mainly providing a school for young intellectuals in love with modern culture; intent upon changing society but finally changing little more than the consciousness of those who had gone through it. After a few years Harvey left that milieu, losing what little interest he had ever had in the dogmatics of socialism; but he remained a socialist to the end.

To call himself a socialist meant for Harvey most of all to preserve the power of moral responsiveness. It meant an immediacy of anger at the outrages that packed our years, whether saturation bombing of Vietnam or persecution of writers in Russia. It meant a sudden burst of scorn—the scorn of a man who never had any use for trimmers—whenever he heard about an intellectual whose nose had lost the capacity for smelling out dead fish. It meant plunging into occasional politics, as Harvey did in the recent campaign, and then pulling back, a little quizzi-

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cal—though with an awareness that when he was needed again, he would be there. It meant a wonderful grasp of the experience, the feelings and aspirations, of those workers whom so many of our friends had come to treat with a poisonous condescension—one thinks especially of Harvey's classical essay, "The Myth of the Happy Worker," a piece of writing full of his characteristic hard sense and pungent rebelliousness. It meant, as he wrote a dozen years ago, "my kinship has been with those writers who imply, even as they treat of trouble and terror, that the world could be better, just as my commitment has been to those human beings who believe—despite every awful evidence to the contrary—that the world *must* be better." It meant *standing fast*—the man with the white beard, full-figured, handsome as the very devil, is the same as the boy in Buffalo, rosy, cheerful, serious: still the comrade of our early hopes.

HARVEY BECAME A NOVELIST, and the writing of fiction was the passion of his life. His novels are works of substance, memorable less for their happenings than for the secure voice that comes through, with a kind of rough-textured affection; the voice of a man struggling to understand his time. There's not a trace of fashionableness in them, not the least glimmer of concession to whatever is the "going thing." The books are like Harvey himself, chunks of integrity, the imaginings of a good man, firm with the drama of conscience. Nothing—neither the impatience of critics, nor commercial failure, nor the wiles of the *Zeitgeist*—could induce Harvey to write in any way but the one that he had to. A young friend, also a novelist, told me to say that Harvey was regarded by all who knew him as a "model of honesty and commitment"—and so let us say it. But it's like saying his name was Harvey Swados.

He wasn't a saint. . . . He was human, and that meant, at times, impatient, stubborn, disappointed, irascible. Like other writers before him, he found it hard to bear what he regarded as neglect of his work. He had a sort of ingrained, rather funny suspicion of the literary life in the big city, his view of it always seeming closer to the novels of Balzac than to the reality of New York. He could be contentious, and finding in me an equal talent, he would steadily write letters, which I as steadily answered, about our political disagreements.

But what do such things matter when one thinks of his openness, his charm, his vibrancy —the way he seemed to rush out to embrace the life that came to him? Part of the fun of visiting the Swadoses was always the sense one had of a rich, intense family life, with its interweaving of politics and music and theater, its incomparable closeness and devotion. In the last few years, whenever I read some silly article about "the end of the family," I would immediately think back to the Swadoses and then the whole idea that families such as theirs could be anything but the true norm of our existence seemed absurd.

It's customary on such occasions to end on a note of reconciliation with fate, to make one's peace—in words if not feeling—with the reality that has been imposed on us. But I don't think Harvey would have liked that at all, he would have snorted and scoffed at such an idea. That he was deprived of the twenty or twenty-five years of additional life which should have been his; that he was cut off from the work of his fulfillment and the triumphs of his children—this seems an outrage. I say it because that is what Harvey would say himself—this friend, the rosy boy, the man with the white beard, standing fast.

Irving Howe □

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Joseph Epstein

The New Conservatives: Intellectuals in Retreat

Ten years ago, who could have predicted the rise of a new conservatism in American life? Yet such a conservatism has arisen, and what among other things is new about it is that, unlike previous incarnations of conservatism in America, it speaks neither in the gruff voice of established privilege nor in the hollow one of aristocratic pretension. No, the novelty of this new conservatism resides in the fact that it appears to be a conservatism arrived at upon disinterested grounds—a conservatism more purely intellectual, and hence more formidable, than any in recent decades. The names associated with it are reputable, belonging mostly to men of solid achievement in the social sciences or intellectual journalism, many of them having themselves once been figures of impeccable liberal or radical standing. Could this be the serious conservatism America has so long lacked?

Over the past century in America, conservatism has had an ample popular and a scant intellectual following. In American intellectual life, in fact, it was not so very long ago that conservatism seemed a dead issue. In the early 1950s, Peter Viereck, echoing Edmund Wilson's plea to intellectuals of two decades earlier to "take communism away from the communists," implored them now to "take conservatism away from the conservatives." But if any American intellectuals of earnest conservative propensities were out there, they either were not listening or felt it a mistake to heed Viereck's call. Conservatism by and large remained with the conservatives, which meant with those who had a vested interest in existing economic and political privilege and those who were temperamentally opposed to change.

As a political program, an intellectual response to events, or a body of thought having something pertinent to say about contemporary society, the stock of conservatism ran low among intellectuals. The only intellectuals who could be said to participate in it were those who believed in the principles of the market economy (F. A. von Hayek and Milton Friedman), or who believed Senator Joseph McCarthy on balance a good thing for the country (William F. Buckley, Jr., and the editors of *National Review*), or who began with a libertarian hatred of Communism that in time turned into a strong distaste for the liberal-left generally (Sidney Hook and others whose primary political preoccupation was with the Cold War). Taken together, these men could doubtless find as much to disagree as to agree about; but even assuming a rough consensus among them, as a group they were very far from able to confer any sort of serious standing upon conservatism as an intellectual force in American life.

It took the New Left, both in its political and cultural aspects, to do that. As recently as the middle 1960s, it could still be said with some confidence that conservatism counted for little in intellectual circles. It took the political madnesses committed in

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the name of the left to make conservatism not merely intellectually respectable but to many intellectuals deeply appealing—no small task in the United States, where the overwhelming political intellectual tradition has been clearly liberal-left. It took a Tom Hayden, an Eldridge Cleaver, an Abby Hoffman, it took Weathermen and Panthers and an evening at the apartment of the Leonard Bernsteins to reveal the unmistakable premonition that, should these various people have their way, society as we know it, in all its imperfections but also in all its glories, would be replaced by a desert inhabited by the nihilistic and the bored rich.

Yet could one be against the congeries of personalities, organizations, and trends that went by the name of "the Movement" without having to think oneself, or for that matter actually being, conservative? One could indeed, and many liberal-left intellectuals opposed the Movement from its earliest days for its totalitarian cast—for its disregard of basic democratic forms, its casual accommodation of violence within its own ranks, its feverish hatred of America, and its heavy antinomian strain—without themselves abandoning their own traditional yet still valid left politics. Other intellectuals drew a different moral from the experience of the 1960s, seeing the decade not as a serious and sad deviation from liberal-left politics but as their logical outcome. Many of these men, turning away from the liberal-left, were to be in the forefront of a new conservatism that was to loom large in the politics of the 1970s.

II

> We see that, if M. Dumont had died in 1799, he would have died, to use the new cant word, a decided "Conservative."
>
> —Lord Macaulay

Macaulay called conservative "the new cant word" in an eassy on Mirabeau in 1832, and no doubt many people who have had the word applied to them since have felt much the same about it. "Conservative" was still a fairly new word in Macaulay's day, having come into usage only after the French Revolution—the first modern political event sufficiently grand in sweep and unnerving in impact to turn people's minds to thoughts of "conserving" their traditions, their property, and not least their heads. But the word has remained in use ever since, picking up and dropping off nuances over the years, its meaning changing all the while, sometimes subtly and sometimes not so subtly.

Like liberalism, conservatism has never been either a very compact or an altogether coherent body of doctrine. Again like liberalism, it has traditionally been part of a controversy, one side of a long argument over the true nature of the historical process —over the question, that is, in what direction and at what pace change ought to take place in society. As such, conservatism has appeared in different guises over the decades: as the extoller of tradition and older values, as the philosophy of economic freedom, as the defender of order and the status quo, and as the label affixed to a political mood or temperament. Again as with liberalism, there is nothing immutable about conservatism, and truths that in one generation were thought to be liberal or radical can turn up a generation or two later under the banner of conservatism. To cite an example that has by now become a cliché in the history of political philosophy, 19-century liberalism is in its broadest lineaments very nearly congruent with 20-century laissez-faire conservatism.

Because one of conservatism's best-known guises has been as a rationalization for whatever happens to be the existing distribution of power, it has never been in very good odor with American intellectuals. American intellectuals as a class, at any rate since the Civil War, have tended to be quite distant from centers of power. And the intellectual's ideological heritage as it has accumulated

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over the years has tended to be anticonservative at its base. As described by Edward Shils, a sagacious student of intellectuals and no friend to the ideological caste of mind, the best of this heritage includes: "the demand for moral equality, the distrust of authority and of the institutions which it conducts for its own continuance, the insistence on justice, and the call to a heroic existence, even the belief in the earthly paradise and the realm of freedom. . . ." Where intellectuals in America have in any significant fashion served power, as during the presidential terms of Franklin Roosevelt, it has been under liberal auspices; or, as during the presidential terms of Kennedy and Johnson, under the facade of liberal auspices.

Until now, at least the facade had to be preserved. No longer, apparently. Evidence of this is not difficult to find. In November 1969, in one of his many attacks on what he called the outrageous bias of the news media, Vice-President Agnew quoted from the work of a number of intellectuals in defense of his own position. In some intellectual quarters there was a certain embarrassment about this. *Commentary,* for example, where one of the pieces from which the Vice-President quoted had originally appeared, saw fit to print a letter by its editor disassociating the magazine from Mr. Agnew and his line on the media. Three years later, some of these same intellectuals, and a good many others besides, purchased an ad in the *New York Times* to announce their intention to vote for Nixon and Agnew and to encourage fellow citizens to do the same. The point is less relevant to electoral politics than to what it has to say about a major shift in the political mood of some influential intellectuals. Coming out for Richard Nixon, a figure who more than any other in American public life had been the target of unreserved contempt on the part of the intellectual community, was a starkly symbolic act demonstrating how totally disenchanted these men had become with the politics of the liberal-left.

III

> How does a radical—a mild radical, it is true, but still someone who felt closer to radical than to liberal writers and politicians in the late 1950's—end up by early 1970 a conservative, a mild conservative, but still closer to those who now call themselves conservative than to those who call themselves liberals?
>
> —NATHAN GLAZER, "On Being Deradicalized"

Once one gets down to naming the names of those who might fairly be described as "new conservatives," one quickly discovers how various a lot these men are, as well as how very different they are from those whom till now one had been accustomed to think of as American conservatives. Many of the new conservatives disavow the label.

Nathan Glazer, who readily enough admits to some conservative inclinations, argued in the pages of *Commentary* for George McGovern for President—surely an unusual gesture even for a "mild" conservative. Irving Kristol, one of the two coeditors of the *Public Interest,* is perhaps the quintessential new conservative in that many of the ideas, feelings and tendencies most characteristic of new conservative thought find their boldest expression in his writing. Yet Kristol, in the Preface to *On the Democratic Idea in America,* a collection of his recent essays, remarks: "It is fairly clear, I would hope, that I am not comfortable with what passes for either liberalism or conservatism in the United States today." Daniel Bell, the other coeditor of the *Public Interest,* is less easily described. Although the journal he has helped edit has in effect become the house organ for new conservative thought, Bell did not sign the *New York Times* ad endorsing Richard Nixon for president, nor has he written much in a directly polemical way that would prove him to have altogether dropped his liberal-left stance.

Norman Podhoretz qualifies as a new conservative largely by default. As editor of

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Commentary and an exceptionally talented journalist, Podhoretz has run much material with a strong new conservative flavor, providing many of the new conservative writers, who normally appear in the *Public Interest,* a home away from home. In his personal monthly column, Podhoretz has spoken without equivocation against quotas, the mentality behind the zero population growth movement, the New Left, the New Politics, and that group of moneyed, morally smug, and well-schooled Americans David Bazelon once described as the New Class. No single one of these positions would necessarily qualify Norman Podhoretz as a conservative, new or old; in fact, a democratic radical could in good faith hold to any of them. Yet by adopting these positions in combination with the single-minded concentration of his editorial firepower on the (very real) excesses of New Left rhetoric and countercultural idiocy, to the near-total exclusion of the (equally very real) excesses of the Nixon-Agnew administration, not to speak of abrasions and abuses still dealt out to great numbers of people in America, Podhoretz has in effect allowed his liberal-left credentials to lapse. While he may well think his own current political position to be "centrist," no other intellectual, save perhaps Irving Kristol, has done more to bring the new conservatism into prominence.

Norman Podhoretz, Irving Kristol, Nathan Glazer—is the new conservatism in the main restricted to New York intellectuals, yet another phenomenon bred in the cafeterias at City College and nurtured on Morningside Heights? Not at all. Although the strands of origin and influence are not so easily separated, it is clear that the new conservatism is very much a national matter. Some of its staunchest academic adherents—Edward Banfield, for example, or James Q. Wilson—were trained as social scientists at the University of Chicago. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, currently U.S. ambassador to India, and doubtless the best-known of the new conservatives, came by his views at least in part in the rough-and-tumble of urban Irish politics. Robert Nisbet, who is scarcely a newcomer to conservatism but has long brought a deep intelligence and high principles to his political writing, acquired his political orientation at the great university that was Berkeley in the 1930s. Others frequently mentioned among the new conservatives, with varying accuracy, are James Coleman, Morris Janowitz, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Harry Johnson. But the main point is that the new conservatism is neither parochial in outlook nor powerless in the world. In government, in the academy, in journalism—in short, in all those modern institutions out of which influence can be radiated with the greatest intensity—the new conservatism is extremely well-placed.

IV

> My brother Evgeni Yakovlevich used to say that the decisive part in the subjugation of the intelligentsia was played not by terror and bribery (though, God knows, there was enough of both), but by the word "Revolution," which none of them could bear to give up.
>
> —NADEZHDA MANDELSTAM, *Hope Against Hope*

Before attending to what the new conservatives are saying, to the quality of their thought, and to their likely impact on American politics in the years immediately ahead, let us first look to what they have thus far accomplished.

First, although they were not alone in this, the new conservatives helped push back "the mob." Edmund Burke once described the mob as the linkage of "obnoxious wealth to restless and desperate poverty," but in the America of the last half of the '60s much more than these elements was linked. Involved were great hordes of the disaffected middle class, comprised in unequal parts of students, middle-aged men and women terrified of being left behind by youth, and psychosexual adventurers like Dotson Rader who in the passage below about Andy Warhol

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conveys how the "swinging" radicalism of the '60s allowed those who engaged in it to play out their separate little fantasies:

> Certainly in the Velvet Underground and the Exploding plastic Inevitable, in the disaster paintings, in his films beatifying manhood through violence through the cult of leather, with his bike boys and hustlers and impotent studs worn through and phasing out on scag and the pretenses of the butch, in that vision he [Warhol] joined with much of what rumbled in the consciousness of the New Left, much of what was true for the Weatherman and the Panther and, for a time, true for me.

Then there were those older radical intellectuals who should have known better but, when it came to the crunch, didn't: Dwight Macdonald, like some sad Sabbatian, thinking that the revolutionary messiah had come to Columbia University (of all places!) and consequently cheering on the students in their mischief; Philip Rahv, playing at being Plekhanov; and Paul Goodman, toward the end of his days regretting many of the forces loose among the American young that he had himself helped unleash.

Many of the same events that brought out the pathetic worst in several intellectuals traditionally aligned with the liberal-left caused the conversion of others so aligned to the new conservatism. Nathan Glazer notes that he came to believe that "the radical thinking of the late 1960s was almost completely misguided, based on an amazing ignorance of the lineaments of modern society and an almost equally amazing arrogance." Norman Podhoretz, as editor of *Commentary,* tirelessly tracked down and clubbed away at each fresh outcropping of "swinging" radicalism. Marcuse, the *New York Review of Books,* the Panthers, the Population Controllers, the Radical Educational Theorists, one by one *Commentary* went after each, and many others beside, in a thankless,* though often successful, demolition job. It was almost as if the magazine had taken its cue from the final sentence in Nathan Glazer's essay "On Being Deradicalized," which read:

> I, for one, indeed, have by now come to feel that this radicalism [that of the late '60s] is so beset with error and confusion that our main task, if we are ever to mount a successful assault on our problems, must be to argue with it and to strip it ultimately of the pretension that it understands the causes of our ills and how to set them right.

If the new conservatism stood up to the New Left onslaught upon rationality, it had also, in the course of doing so, shown how thin American thought on the left had become. When one looked closely, it became apparent that what passed for the American left had grown mentally stale, dumb in fact. The New Left had no program to speak of, nor did it appear much interested in putting together a coherent critique of American life. It was organized around a number of soft, exceedingly vague issues, calling less for thoughtful than for emotional responses. Do you feel opposed to the Establishment? Are you on the side of Youth? How badly do you despise Oppression, a state known equally to blacks, Chicanos, students, housewives, and account executives deprived of fulfillment? Where, finally, do you stand in regard to the Revolution? Establishment, Youth, Oppression, Revolution—these were the buzz words of the late '60s, sounded over and over again without much in the way of thought behind them. "The enemy," Orwell

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* Thankless because largely unappreciated, where not actually depreciated, by intellectuals. The lowest motives were attributed to Podhoretz for steering *Commentary* along the editorial course he chose. He was the sheerest opportunist, it was said. A righward path was the only turf left open to him by the *New York Review of Books.* The American Jewish Committee, publisher of *Commentary,* had laid down the law to him. So the rumors ran, with few people apparently willing to believe that Podhoretz was simply acting out of conviction. The fact is, *Commentary's* was very clearly a minority position within the intellectual community during the '60s, and that its editor took it up and pursued it without relief or ambiguity demonstrated courage and intellectual stamina.

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once wrote, "is the gramophone mind, whether or not one agrees with the record that is being played at the moment."

The new conservatives were soon to put a new record on, a much more interesting and skillful one, and it wouldn't be long before people began to dance to it.

V

> We engage in political activity so that we may, as societies of men, deal with the world as it is. This is not a slight endeavor; the world as it is, as experience teaches us, is not easy to deal with
>
> —HENRY FAIRLIE, "Camelot Revisited"

In response to theories of conspiracy in places high and low (the *Ramparts*-syndrome), the new conservatives answered with the soothing voice of social science; to cries about the wretched of the earth, with cool displays of statistics; and to hysterical shouts of "Fascist Amerika," with historical perspective. The New Left of the late '60s spoke out on behalf of the world as it ought to be, as radicals had traditionally done, but they went down to defeat by the new conservatives because they were woefully ignorant about the world as it is.

The world as it is versus the world as it ought to be—this, when the issue hasn't simply been one of naked power between two men or factions, is what the conflict between right and left in politics has always been about. In looking across the invisible line that divides men politically, left and right each sees the other as not merely mistaken in its views but deficient in precisely those virtues that it especially prides itself upon. The left, which sees itself as on the side of decency, looks upon the right as heartless. The right, seeing itself as richly endowed with a firm grasp on reality, looks upon the left as naive.

Realism, or so its adherents would claim, is the long suit of the new conservatism. In his very tough-minded book on cities, *The Unheavenly City,* Edward Banfield notes that he will doubtless be taken to be an "ill-tempered and mean-spirited fellow." He adds: "But facts are facts, however unpleasant, and they have to be faced unblinkingly by anyone who really wants to improve matters in the cities." In the essay on his "Deradicalization," Nathan Glazer remarks on the influence a year spent working at the Housing and Home Finance Administration had on the maturation of his political views: "It was a big country," he learned, "and it contained more kinds of people than were dreamed of on the shores of the Hudson." In describing his own political position—about which more directly—Irving Kristol writes that it "is not an obviously secure position, but neither is it, I would insist, a completely unrealistic one." Facts are facts, it's a big country, let's be realistic —such is the dominant tone of the new conservatism.

The other great note sounded by the new conservatives is "complexity." In a recent issue of the *Public Interest* Daniel Patrick Moynihan writes:

> Political society wants things simple. Political scientists know them to be complex. . . . One could argue that, in part, the leftist impulse is so conspicuous among the educated and well-to-do precisely because they are exposed to more information, and are accordingly forced to choose between living with the strains of complexity or lapsing into simplism.

This is hitting the note of complexity more sonorously than usual, yet the note itself recurs throughout new conservative thought. "In a world of infinte complexity," Nathan Glazer writes, "some things had emerged and survived. . . ." Among the new conservatives, the world is not only too much with us, but, given its complexity, damn near indecipherable.

The world is also heavy with irony. This quality is especially underscored in the work of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who is in some respects the most attractive of the new con-

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servative writers. Moynihan is, first, really a writer, as opposed to someone who merely writes; and, unlike others of the new conservatives, he brings long and varied experience of government to his writing—some 13 years of it, by his own count, over the past two decades. As a prose writer, Moynihan has a decided craving for elegance, and along with it a strong taste for generalization, and the two combined render him especially delighted at the discovery of irony in contemporary events. Thus, in *The Politics of a Guaranteed Income,* his recently published account of the development and ultimate defeat of the Family Assistance Plan, Moynihan early on writes: "There was irony as well as tragedy in the history that followed." As so often in new conservative writing, the tragedy could be laid at the door of liberal foolishness, the irony that the liberal-left had once again acted against its own avowed best interests.

In this particular instance, whether the liberal-left's defeat of Richard Nixon's plan for a guaranteed income was a case of looking a gift horse in the mouth or instead a more prudent examination of the teeth of merchandise offered by an old horse trader of dubious reputation depends upon the credence one invests in Moynihan's portrait of Nixon as a tory radical. ("Tory men and liberal policies," Moynihan quotes Nixon remarking, "are what have changed the world.") But a more compact example of Moynihan's method—and, by extension, of the new conservatism's—is to be found in an essay entitled "The Schism in Black America."

The schism has to do with the fact that, as Moynihan reads and understands the census data, things for blacks are going in two directions simultaneously. *"Some things are geting better, others worse."* Briefly, things are getting very much better for young black husband-wife families, which are everywhere beginning to close, and in some statistical situations have closed, the gap in income between themselves and white families of equal education. "This improvement did not 'just' happen *to* blacks," Moynihan writes. "It was made to happen *by* black persons working hard for things they want." In the other direction, the number of those who were down slipped further. "In gross terms, the number of blacks below the poverty line declined 49.4 percent between 1959 and 1968 for families with male heads; but it increased 23.6 percent for those with female heads." But Moynihan's real point in this essay has less to do with these particular trends than it does with his belief that *"considerable energy is devoted to denying either trend."*

The liberal-left, nearly as much as poverty itself, soon becomes the villain of the piece. Why, Moynihan asks, does progress toward equality, such as the above-mentioned success of black husband-wife families, go ignored? "Social change," he notes, "is not easily achieved. When it successfully occurs, we ought to know about it, and permit it to cheer us up." Moynihan adds: "Nothing I have written in this article provides *any* grounds for complacency," and he elaborates in terms no one on the liberal-left need disagree with (except for their incompleteness):

> Lower-class behavior in our cities is shaking them apart. Upper-class lying—that the men in jail are political prisoners, that the fatherless child is happier, that the welfare system is a conspiracy to keep the proletariat passive—is destroying standards of discourse. The language of poltitics grows more corrupt. . . . We approach a fantasized condidition.

Yet it is open to question whether we all don't have a stake, not in denying progress where it has legitimately been made, but in not featuring it. Where genuine progress is made, it ought duly to be noted, both because, as Moynihan suggests, it may improve our morale and because it may serve as a guide to setting future social policy. But as for celebrating it in any large-scale way, this scarcely seems what is called for. With mil-

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lions of people in America still living quite wretchedly, and the conditions of others worsening, it still seems best that, in the main, we accord what progress is made "benign neglect," to coin a phrase. As Bayard Rustin once noted, writing about Moynihan in another connection: "To point out improvements where they have been made but not to couple this with an urgent call for more action is to provide an excuse for complacency and criminal inaction."

Rustin would go—indeed has gone—further. Having noted that some years back, at a national board meeting of Americans for Democratic Action held after the riots in Newark and Detroit, Moynihan "urged that liberals form a coalition with conservatives in the interests of social order," Rustin, tying this in with Moynihan's "benign neglect" memo to President Nixon, went on to remark: "From this point of view Moynihan's role in the Nixon administration becomes tragically clear. As liberal cover for a conservative administration, he is not advancing liberalism so much as helping to entrench conservatism."

Which brings up the interesting point about the political context of the rise to prominence of the new conservatives. This context has of course been the first and second administration of Richard Nixon, which in many respects makes the position of the new conservatives anomalous. On the one hand, the new conservative intellectuals have been among the ablest chroniclers of the excesses of the New Left, especially (and deservedly) in its counter-cultural and anti-democratic aspects, while they have also been the first group of intellectuals to question liberal assumptions in America from a point of view that is at once sophisticated and not to the left of liberalism. Yet it is not exactly as if all they are saying isn't entirely welcome to the Nixon administration. This situation has had consequences that reverberate well beyond the confines of debate among intellectuals.

Consider Moynihan's own position. As former assistant to the president for Urban Affairs and executive secretary of the Nixon administration's Urban Affairs Council, Moynihan, by his own account, was in the forefront of the fight to achieve a guaranteed income for the poor through a negative income tax. In the course of that fight, he came out strongly against those "service" programs—community action, manpower retraining, etc.—which, as he has said, he "had not the least confidence in." Between a guaranteed income and more service programs—or, in the parlance of government social science, between an "income strategy" and a "service strategy"—Moynihan clearly much preferred and argued forcibly on behalf of the former. Yet, as everyone now knows, the battle for the guaranteed income was defeated in the Senate. Curiously enough, the week after the final installment of Moynihan's account of that defeat in the *New Yorker,* when the Nixon budget was announced, the amplest cuts were precisely in those service programs for the poor and elderly that Moynihan had so disdained in favor of the guaranteed income. In the final reckoning, then, on the question of how best to deal with poverty in America, the Nixon administration would be offering *neither* an income *nor* a service strategy; not Benign but more nearly Total Neglect was apparently to be its answer. Now United States ambassador to India, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a man who appreciates a heavy irony, might wish to brood over this one of a hot and sleepless night in New Delhi.

VI

> By reading this book one discovers what Spiro Agnew would sound like if he had gone to CCNY in the Thirties.
> —YOSAL ROGAT, *New York Review of Books*

The book in question is Irving Kristol's *On the Democratic Idea in America,* and reading it one discovers nothing of the kind. Instead, one discovers a keen polemical mind of the sort that belongs to an intellec-

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tual maverick as well as to a man who lives to argue and does it well. Irving Kristol's mind, in short, is neatly calculated to encourage precisely the exaggerated response it can usually be relied upon to receive. A Kristol essay, commanding in tone, supremely confident about subjects that are elsewhere held to be still in the flux of controversy, assuming always that anyone who thinks differently is perverse or inept, is scarcely designed to incite reasoned discussion.

Other intellectuals show one or another aspect of the new conservatism in high relief; in Irving Kristol the full and finished edifice is on display. He is at once the new conservatism's leading journalist-publicist and its prime exemplar. As he seems to have no intellectual doubts, neither does he deal in political equivocations. Kristol avows his own political instincts to be conservative, and, characteristically, remarks that he has come "to believe that an adult's 'normal' political instincts should be" conservative. What is characteristic is the disparagement; anyone who has reached a certain age and has not yet become conservative politically must either be at best "immature," or at worst "abnormal."

Unlike others of the new conservatives, many of whom came to their views as a result of the devastations of the '60s, Kristol's conservatism is not altogether new. As an editor of *Commentary* (under Elliott Cohen), a founding editor of *Encounter,* and an editor of the *Reporter,* Kristol has over the years tended to be viewed as a liberal when in fact he has long been something of a closet Tory.* Roughly a decade ago, for example, Kristol was jabbing holes in the reports of widespread poverty in America by insisting that no matter how rich our nation, one-fifth of it would always be poor (or poorer than the other four-fifths), that poverty was after all a comparative thing (compared with the poor, say, of Asia, the American poor lived in splendor), and (though this was never said, it was implied in the foregoing) so why bother!

That Kristol could write so in a preponderantly liberal climate was a tribute to the sharpness of his prose. Everyone had heard ideas of this kind before, but it was rather a novelty to see them cast in such fine prose. There is something in the grand English amateur tradition about Kristol's prose. (If City College can be said to have put the blacking on his education, then London, during his years as coeditor of *Encounter,* must have supplied the polish.) His prose, certainly, has a very high shine—so high, in fact, that it is likely to blind a hurried reader to the fact that Irving Kristol often wouldn't have a subject to write about if it weren't for what he construes to be the cowardice, stupidity, and general intellectual confusion so rampant on the liberal-left.

Although a slim volume, the eight essays in Kristol's book comprise a thoroughgoing attack on the liberal-left ethos. Sometimes Kristol is directly on target in his attack, when, as in his essay "Urban Civilization and Its Discontents," he writes:

> The moral code for all civilizations must, at one time or another, be prepared to face the ultimate subversive question: "Why not?" Our civilization is now facing that very question in the form of the drug problem, and, apparently, it can only respond with tedious, and in the end ineffectual, medical reports.

But just as often he misses the target. He can, for example, write disparagingly of the "highly apocalyptic notions of the present" in one essay, then turn round to sound the apocalyptic note himself: "Today," he wrote in *Fortune* in 1968, "one does have cause to believe that we are approaching one of those historical watersheds that separate worlds in time." He can be a poor prophet, as when,

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* The tactical duplicity implied by such a phrase is intended. Until the past five years or so, conservative sentiments among American intellectuals who wished to be taken seriously were best kept hidden. The only home for such thoughts was the *National Review,* the Siberia of intellectual journalism.

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in an essay entitled "American Intellectuals and Foreign Policy," he predicts the transformation of the American two-party system to make room "for a mass party of the ideological left, as in most European countries—except that its grass roots will be on the campus rather than in the factory." But a contradiction here or there, a mistaken prophesy, a patch of factual thinness—these, while they exist in Kristol's essays, are less important than the assumptions under which he writes in the first place.

Kristol's conservatism derives from a deep distrust of "the ideology of liberal democracy, in its twentieth-century version," which he was born and grew up in "as into a civil religion." Alongside this distrust has grown a deep suspicion of liberal-left activism. "I have observed over the years," Kristol writes, "that the unanticipated consequences of social action are always more important, and usually less agreeable, than the intended consequences." Finally, Kristol holds that many of our institutions "have become so debased as to need substantial reformation, not only to survive but to merit survival." All this being so, he sees his own position being on the side of the "enterprise of conservative reform."

"Conservative reform" sounds eminently respectworthy, except that when Kristol comes to address himself to particular areas he is generally all conservative criticism with the reform side absent. On the question of what ought to be the role of intellectuals in foreign policy, his answer, despite many an interesting observation along the way, is that intellectuals, having no real responsibility, ought probably to stay the hell out. On the issue of inequality, after taking his readers down a fascinating detour having to do with power struggles between intellectuals and the business community, he concludes that the issue is in reality a cover for a deep and unappeasable anguish at the loss of religion. On the question "Is the American Worker Alienated?" the answer Kristol supplies is, Not Really, only the sociologists who study him are. On the problems of our public schools, it turns out that many of these problems don't really exist, being the product of minds in the grip of social hypochondria, feverishly thinking up new crises, and that in fact, by and large, the system is working and that "since it is our system . . . perhaps we ought to be less ill-tempered about it than we usually are."

Read separately, when they are not dominated by fits of bad temper, Irving Kristol's essays can give off a whiff of political philosphy and of subtlety; read together, they come to acquire an odor curiously akin to Couéism. Every day, and in every way, American society is becoming better and better.

VII

> One often advises rulers, statesmen, and peoples to learn from the experiences of history. But what experience and history teach is that peoples and governments have never yet learned from history, let alone acted according to its lessons.
>
> —G. W. F. HEGEL, *Reason in History*

To what extent is the Couéism found in Kristol, which takes the form of denying any strenuous flaws in American life, built into the new conservatism? Irving Kristol notes that he considers himself part of the tradition of conservative reform. Norman Podhoretz insists that his own deradicalization has nothing to do with any "sudden lapse into indifference over the remediable ills which afflict the world." Yet reading Irving Kristol, or *Commentary,* or Irving Kristol in *Commentary,* the reigning impression one gets is that what is mainly wrong with America today is a number of bad ideas, a handful of intellectuals acting in bad faith, and some confusions about the glories of our national life—all coming from or inspired by the liberal-left intelligentsia—and that once these are eliminated the country can get on with

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the business of gradual reform (and, as it often seems, the more gradual the better).

Yet, one wonders, who is the enemy that continues to draw the new conservatives' fire? Where once he was substantial, surely now he is no more than a wraith. The New Left is not merely any longer not New, it is by now moribund if not deceased. The Democratic party, done in by its own divisiveness, is in shambles. Whereas the radical politics of the '30s could in some rough sense be said to have ended in the New Deal—a qualified but still real victory for the American liberal-left—those of the '60s ended in two presidential terms for Richard Nixon. Whereas James Q. Wilson once wrote that "empathy (though not outright approval) governed the liberal response to urban riots and campus disorder," surely if once true, this is true no longer, urban riots and campus disorders having come to an end and liberal empathy for them having long since been snuffed out. The heat is off, and a large number of those on the liberal-left as well as new conservatives seem frankly relieved.

The heat in question is, of course, that for social change. The election of Richard Nixon meant a real lowering of the thermostat in this connection, and perhaps the chief function of the new conservatism, though one suspects they are not about to own up to it, is to keep it down. There is much talk in the *Public Interest,* and from new conservatives generally, about "the limits of social policy." Yet it is one thing to say that on certain brutally tough social problems we don't as yet have any convincing solutions; quite another to say, as those who talk about the limits of social policy imply, that none exist or are likely to be found.

Already, anyone who cares to look closely can perceive a sad dialectic at work among the new conservatives. Opposing itself to the strongly antidemocratic New Left, it appears to be setting itself up as the false antithesis to a false thesis. Where the '60s radicalism was anti-American, committed to a dreary view of the country in all its aspects and prone to see the nation as generally headed toward hell in a handwagon, the new conservatism is pro-American, committed to a cheery view of the nation's current estate and prone to see the good society as having very nearly arrived. Thus, Irving Kristol doubts that the average American feels more powerless today than in the past; Norman Podhoretz, quoting a Gallup Poll on his behalf, sees no "social meanness" in America; and Daniel Patrick Moynihan remarks that one of the great secrets of American politics is that while ideologically Americans are conservative, in practice they are liberal. What we have here, raised to an intellectual power, is the spirit of Rotarianism.

Viewed thus far in its brief history, the new conservatism strongly resembles another abrupt shift in political orientation among American intellectuals—namely, that undertaken by the group of intellectuals who came to be known as the Cold Warriors. Observe some parallels. Both the Cold Warriors and the new conservatives initially pitted themselves against very real enemies—for the former, Stalinism at home and abroad; for the latter, the antidemocratic New Left. Both the Cold Warriors and the new conservatives took up positions that in some respects were not only correct but required courage to hold, in that they went against the grain of the majority of their intellectual peers. Both groups were essentially victorious; and both contributed significantly to the defeat of their avowed enemies by disqualifying them intellectually.

At the same time, the efforts of both the Cold Warriors and of the new conservatives were warmly encouraged by the administrations in power—as the CIA sponsored a number of the intellectual activities of the Cold Warriors, so are the new conservatives said to be widely read and appreciated within the Nixon administration. In each case the explanation was scarcely subtle: intellectuals were doing the bidding of their government. Not, it should be added, directly or by formal contract or secret pact,

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but because the interior logic of their situations had driven them into near (if not complete) accord with the government's own purposes—in the case of the Cold Warriors, the shared unanimity was on the implacable opposition of East and West; in that of the new conservatism, the shared unanimity is on the dangers of undertaking precipitate social action (the "limits of social policy"). The respective positions of the Cold Warriors and of the new conservatives locked each into an exceedingly optimistic view of their own society: the former had their "free world," the latter their America without "social meanness." The overall effect seemed to be the same. With both the Cold Warriors and the new conservatives one saw men with good minds and initially fine intentions fall victim to an emotional investment in a single idea—anti-Stalinism for the Cold Warriors, antiradicalism for the new conservatives—an investment that grew so deep as to blur out all else in the world, not least the most obvious injustices all round them. The tragic flaw for both the Cold Warriors and for the new conservatives, then, has been monomania.

Again as with the Cold Warriors, so now with the new conservatives—once astride the stallion of intellectual monomania, it is not so easy to dismount. Apparently one must ride out one's obsessions beyond the fringes of reality. This the new conservatism is currently doing. It continues to flog away at its old enemy, the liberal-left, even as that enemy falls into greater political disarray. On matters of social policy, it cautions that the nation go slow—"today's solution," Irving Kristol warns, "is tomorrow's dilemma"—even as the Nixon administration makes certain it goes nowhere. It claims to believe in the improvability of man's lot, yet ignores his more flagrant social problems, arguing that these problems do not exist (Norman Podhoretz on Pollution), that they have been grossly inflated (Daniel Patrick Moynihan on the plight of blacks in America), or that they are not really problems at all (Irving Kristol on the redistribution of income).

Vested interest, it appears, is not a notion restricted to property alone. The new conservatism has evidently acquired such an interest in its own ideas and, though it began as an anti-ideological force, has itself become ideologized. The bitter sadness is that, with its strong intellectual sophistication, it may well end up a more genuine obstacle to the alleviation of social pain than the obtuse and retrograde conservatism of the privileged that preceded it. □

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Robert L. Heilbroner

Economic Problems of a "Postindustrial" Society

I think I should begin by expressing a certain caution with respect to the premise of my paper, a caution indicated by the quotation marks I have placed around the critical word *postindustrial* in my title. The premise is that we are moving rapidly into a new framework of socioeconomic relationships, a framework sufficiently different from that of the recent past to warrant designation as a new "stage" of our historical development. As this paper will make clear, I do not quarrel with the argument that deep-seated changes in structure, institutions, and behavior are indeed surfacing within the economic sphere, whence they spread out to affect social and political life,[1] but unfortunately a certain voguish quality has come to surround the word "postindustrial" by which we describe this phenomenon.[2] Accordingly, it may be helpful to commence by specifying as clearly as possible what we mean by the "postindustrial" transformation, both to clarify its relationship to the "industrial" era now presumably on the wane, and to highlight those aspects of the coming era that are genuinely new.

LET ME THEREFORE START by exploring rather skeptically three different means that are commonly advanced with regard to the idea of a "postindustrial" society:

1. *A postindustrial society is one in which a preponderance of economic activity is located in the "tertiary" sector of the economy.*

This definition of postindustrialism calls attention to the shift in occupational locus whose beginnings can be discerned far back in the 19th century.[3] As the history of every industrialized country indicates, the proportion of the labor force employed in agriculture shrinks to a very small fraction of the total work force: in the United States only 4 percent of the civilian labor force is to be found on the farm and this includes a considerable residue of subsistence farmers. Meanwhile, the industrial "core," compris-

[1] This statement implies a certain economic determinism. I will deal specifically with this issue at the end of this essay.

[2] A great amount of literature—too long for a footnote—now deals with "postindustrial society." The most sophisticated version of the concept is to be found in Daniel Bell's work: see especially the symposium, including his essay, in *Survey*, Winter 1971; see also "The Post-Industrial Society: The Evolution of an Idea," *Survey*, Spring 1971, and *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). Reference should also be made to Zbigniew Brzezinski's *Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technotronic Era* (New York: Viking, 1970). A more simplistic and quantitative exploration of the term is to be found in Herman Kahn's and Anthony Wiener's *The Year Two Thousand* (New York: Macmillan, 1967). Numerous books have popularized the idea, of which the currently most widely quoted is Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock* (New York: Random House, 1970).

[3] In England in 1811 less than a third of the work force was employed in agriculture, and over a third was in services throughout the first half of the 19th century. (B. R. Mitchell, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 60; S. Kuznets, *Modern Economic Growth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 106.

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ing manufacturing, mining, transportation, construction, and utilities, has stabilized at roughly a third of the work force.[4] The remainder of the population—over 60 percent of the work force in the United States today—is employed in the congeries of occupations that produce "final" services.

From one industrial nation to another the magnitude of these proportions varies, but the "drift" is visible in all, as the table below clearly indicates:

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED WORKERS

	Agriculture	Industry	Service
U.S., 1900	38	38	24
1970	4	35	61
France, 1950	35	45	20
1970	17	39	44
West Germany, 1950	24	48	28
1968	10	48	42
U.K., 1950	6	56	39
1970	4	45	50

Source: *U.S. Historical Statistics,* p. 74; *Economic Indicators* (1972), European countries: OECD, *Basic Statistics of the Community* (1970).

Thus the definition of a postindustrial society that rests on a marked shift in the locus of employments can be amply demonstrated by statistical data. Nonetheless, a few cautionary remarks are in order. First, let us note that the industrial sector has not been the source of the main change in the profile of sectoral employment. Although it has declined slightly in France and England during the last 20 years, in Germany the percentage is unchanged; and in the United States *over a period of 70 years* the decline has been minuscule. The great sectoral transformation of our times, in other words, has not been so much a shift from "industry" to "service" as a shift from agricultural to service tasks.[5]

In addition, we must note that some part of the rise in service employment represents the transfer of certain kinds of work from the nonmonetized household sector to the monetized commercial world. The well-known rise in female labor participation (from 18 percent of all females of working age to 37 percent, in the years 1890 to 1969 in the United States) has brought as a consequence the illusion of a rise in service "employment," as tasks that were formerly carried out within the home, where they remained invisible to the eye of the statistician, emerged onto the marketplace. The growth of the laundry industry, the restaurant industry, the professional care of the aged, even "welfare," represent instances of this semispurious inflation of the growth of "employment" in service occupations.

These caveats and distinctions are important to bear in mind when we use the shift in employment locus as the basis for speculations about the implications of the postindustrial era. Let me briefly summarize what these cautionary thoughts might be.

Presumably the importance of the employment shift for a postindustrial system is that a change in occupational habitat brings new social experiences and needs. Without in any way challenging that supposition, let me warn against the misconception of that change as a massive emigration from industrial work. Nothing of that kind is visible. Instead, the primary "experiential" fact of the employment shift has been the decisive decline of agricultural (farm) employment and a corresponding growth of market-lo-

[4] Transportation and utilities, because they produce nontangible commodities, are often grouped within the tertiary sector; and mining in the primary sector. I group them here in the "industrial" sector because they are integrally connected with industrial processes.

[5] The reader should be warned that these statistics must be interpreted with care. For example, some of the decline in employment in the agricultural sector represents a shift of agriculture-related employment into the industrial and service sectors—e.g., the rise of farm machinery manufacture, of chemical fertilizers, and of a government service sector and a private trade sector occupied with agricultural problems and products. Thus the employment *functionally* related to agriculture is larger, perhaps by a considerable degree, than that "formally" related to it. See S. Lebergott, *Manpower in Economic Growth* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 111. Nevertheless, the basic shift is unquestionably out of rural pursuits through industry into service tasks.

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cated, service-connected tasks. The industrial "core" remains roughly constant. Put differently, the industrial factory worker—the key *dramatis persona* of the Marxian drama —continues to account for approximately the same proportion of the total work experience of the community: unskilled, semiskilled, and skilled workers—the blue-collar group—constituted 25.5 percent of the labor force in 1900 and 34.9 percent in 1968, the main shift taking place *within* this group as most unskilled labor rose to semiskilled levels. Thus, if postindustrial society in fact represents a new stage of socioeconomic relationships, the cause must be sought elsewhere than in the disappearance of the industrial sector as a milieu for work.

2. *A postindustrial society may refer to a change in the nature of growth-producing inputs from quantitative to qualitative factors.*

Here the primary meaning of "postindustrial" calls our attention to numerous studies of growth within industrial countries, and to the more or less common conclusions that "knowledge" has played a steadily rising role in promoting growth, compared with increases in the size of the labor force or the quantity of (unchanged) capital.[6] Drawing on Denison's work we may generalize for the United States that for the two decades prior to 1929 increases in the stock of capital goods and in labor supply together accounted for about two-thirds of our increase in output, whereas in the decades 1929–59 increases in these quantitative factors accounted for only 44 percent of growth. Conversely, improved education and training, which were credited with only 13 percent of growth in the earlier period, were presumed to be the source of more than twice that proportion of growth in the later period. Finally, improved technology—which is, after all, only the concrete application of knowledge—rose from 12 percent of the causes of growth to 20 percent in the same two periods.[7]

These proportions also differ from nation to nation, as Denison has shown in a study of the sources of growth in Western European nations, but the direction of change—as in the case of the migration of labor—is the same throughout. In sum, there is little doubt that statistical examination of growth patterns among industrialized nations shows a steadily increasing importance of "knowledge-related" inputs, and a corresponding decline in increases in brute "labor power" or sheer quantities of unchanged capital (for example, the addition of more railroad tracks).

As in the case of the definition of postindustrialism that emphasizes the shift in the locus of employment, I do not want to denigrate the importance that has been attached to human "capital." [8] Nonetheless it is important, as before, that we scrutinize this characterization of postindustrialism with a certain reserve. For when we do so, we encounter some disconcerting considerations.

First, as we have all come to realize, the meaning of growth is both ill-specified and elusive. Between that collection of often arbitrarily defined outputs called "Gross National Product" and any operational concept of "welfare" is a wide and perhaps

[6] The literature again is too large to be reviewed. Key statements are those of M. Abramovitz, *Resource and Output Trends in the United States Since 1870* (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1956); Robert Solow, "Technical Change and the Aggregate Production Function," Review of *Economics and Statistics*, August 1957; and Edward Denison, *Sources of Economic Growth in the United States* (New York: Committee for Economic Development, 1962).

[7] Denison, *op. cit.*

[8] Ferenc Janossy, *The End of the Economic Miracle* (White Plains, N.Y.: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1971), has a dramatic imaginative illustration of the respective importance of knowledge versus "labor power" or "capital." He asks us to imagine the instantaneous transfer of the populations of two nations, one developed and one underdeveloped—say, England and Pakistan (before its civil war). Is there any doubt, he asks, that the growth curve of "Pakistan" would rapidly turn upward, while that of "England" would soon turn sharply down?

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unbridgeable chasm. Hence much of the "growth" to which modern knowledge seems to contribute so strikingly may be of little or no welfare significance: armaments, space exploration, and pollution-generating production at one extreme; frivolous gadgetry, style changes, and pollution-absorbing technology at the other—the one extreme producing deleterious or dangerous growth, the other illusory or "defensive" growth. In a word, the *quality* of the growth of a "post-industrial" society must be compared with that of an "industrial" society, before we can discuss the rise of knowledge-inputs as a cause for celebration, as well as a simple fact.

Second, before looking for the implications of the shift toward a knowledge-input economy, it behooves us to inquire further into the "fact" of the increase in knowledge input itself. This brings us to the ways in which knowledge input is *measured*. One of these ways—research and development (R & D)—is certainly grossly inflated. Government statistics show a rise in R & D expenditures from roughly $1 billion at the end of World War I to a level of $28 billion in the early 1970s. This enormous increase has led many observers to conclude that we have now "institutionalized" the process of scientific discovery and application, thereby radically changing the nature of the propulsive forces within the economy. More skeptical observers have noted that (inflation aside) the R & D figures in the later years are swollen by the growing tendency to include routine testing or marketing procedures within the category of "research." The actual amount going for basic research in new industrial products for 1966 was estimated to be not $20 billion, but $1 billion.[9]

In addition, a study by Jewkes, Sawers, and Stillerman throws considerable doubt on the effectiveness of "institutional" invention, citing evidence that the preponderance of the important inventions or innovations of the last third of a century have been made by individuals or small firms.[10] Thus there is some reason to regard the institutionalized knowledge-input of the postindustrial society as much less sharply differentiated from that of "industrial" society than might at first appear.

A further caveat with respect to the supposed information revolution applies to the rise in the "stock" of education embodied in the work force. Measured by the conventional criteria of man-years of schooling, there is no doubt that this stock has increased markedly: whereas only 6 percent of the population aged 17 were high school graduates in 1900, nearly 80 percent had completed high school in 1970. Equally dramatic, whereas those enrolled in college in 1900 constituted only 4 percent of the population aged 18–21, today well over half of this age group is in college.

No one can gainsay this change which, like the change in the sectoral location of labor, surely augurs new outlooks, experiences, and expectations for the labor force. To this matter we will return. But it would be hasty to jump from the fact of a higher stock of embodied education to the conclusion that the stock of "knowledge" of the society has increased *pari passu*. For along with the increased training undergone by the labor force has come an increase in the compartmentalization and specialization of its skills, best exemplified by comparing the wide-ranging capabilities of the farmer with the much more narrowly defined work capabilities of the office clerk. To put the matter differently, we cannot assume that a post-industrial society is one in which the general level of "know-how" is raised along with the

[9] John M. Blair, *Economic Concentration* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), p. 15, citing estimate by David Novick of the Rand Corporation.

[10] *The Sources of Invention* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1958; 2nd rev. ed., Norton, 1970). See also Blair, *op. cit.*, pp. 215–27.

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general level of formal education. Insofar as formal education is devoted to exposing the student to the broadest vistas of history, the social and natural sciences, etc., one kind of "knowledge" is undoubtedly increased. In that sense, the average citizen of the post-industrial society is not only "better educated" but really knows more, with regard to the natural sciences, human behavior, etc., *considered as abstractions,* than did his counterpart in industrial or preindustrial society. At a less abstract level, however, the gain is much less. And within that very important branch of social knowledge concerned with the operation of the socioeconomic mechanism, what seems to mark the education-intensive postindustrial society is a marked *decrease* in the ability of the individual to perform work outside his trained specialty—witness our helplessness in the face of a broken utensil, vehicle, electrical system, or plumbing fixture, compared with the versatility of the farmer (or industrial artisan), proverbially jack of all trades, even if master of none.

To raise these cautions against a simplistic view of the postindustrial society as one characterized by a "knowledge explosion" is not to deny that profound alterations are visible within contemporary society as a result of greater educational inputs—alterations that are likely to become even more pronounced in the society of the future.

The first, whose implications we will examine again subsequently, is a change in the expected life-styles of a postindustrial population. Whatever else its effects may be, the exposure to prolonged schooling seems to encourage an expectation of careers in white-collar, as opposed to blue-collar, tasks; and this may indeed militate against the willingness of the "educated" population to consider many manual tasks as appropriate ways of making a livelihood, regardless of the relative incomes to be had from goods-handling, rather than paper-handling, work. Needless to say, this change in expectations accords very well with the actual displacement of labor from agricultural tasks and from the unskilled categories of industrial work, and its increasing deployment in service occupations.

Second and perhaps more important—although necessarily more conjectural—is the educationally based evolution of a "subclass" of highly skilled technicians, scientists, and experts who seem to be moving gradually toward a position of greater influence within the socioeconomic system as a whole. The rise of this "knowledge elite" has been remarked by many.[11] The actual power possessed by the new elite, as well as its degree of sub- or superordination to older elites, is as yet unclear. Nonetheless, there seems little doubt that a new education-based stratification has been created at the apex of the system, and that a new mystique surrounds "the scientist," symbol of the knowledge-oriented postindustrial system, comparable to that which formerly adhered to the captain of industry."[12] Thus the emphasis on "knowledge" as the *differentia specifica* of a postindustrial system is not misplaced, although the precise nature of this difference requires to be spelled out a good deal more carefully than is often the case.

3. *A postindustrial society can be regarded as a "postcapitalist" society—that is, as a socioeconomic formation in which the traditional problems of capitalism will give way before the new organizational modes of a postindustrial system.*

As with the previous "visions" of a post-industrial system, I think there is a core of truth in this view. The bitter class divisions

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[11] See among others, Bell, *op. cit.*, Brzezinski, *op. cit.*, J. K. Galbraith, *The New Industrial State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), and R. Heilbroner, *The Limits of American Capitalism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

[12] Perhaps it is to be noted in passing that the same ambivalence also attaches to this new figure who is viewed, as was the older entrepreneur, both as a heroic personage capable of building a great society and as a demonic force capable of destroying it.

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endemic to capitalism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries seem to be yielding to a society of much greater economic (if not necessarily social or political) consensus. The "welfare" state, however inadequate in actuality, is now a generally accepted model for all industrial societies, and brings with it a considerable degree of "socialism" in the form of guaranteed incomes, family allowances, public health assurance, educational subsidization of lower income groups, and the like. The extreme vulnerability of the system to failures of aggregate demand has been tempered by the growth of a public sector. As a result of these and still other changes, the "revolutionary" proletariat has failed to materialize; moreover, as we have seen above, the size of the industrial proletariat has remained approximately constant.

Thus there *are* cogent reasons for thinking of the postindustrial society as one that differs in significant ways from the economic performance of the industrial capitalism to which it is a successor. Nonetheless, as before, it is wise to look for continuities as well as differences in seeking to delineate the natur of the new socioeconomic environment.

The first of these is the continuance of a trend whose origins can be traced back at least to the third quarter of the 19th century. This is the slow, irregular, but apparently irreversible trend toward the concentration of capital. The figures are well known: in manfacturing, the assets of the top 100 firms in 1968 were as large a share (roughly 49 percent) of all corporate manufacturing assets as the share of the 200 largest industrial firms in 1950. Similarly the top 200 firms in 1968 controlled as large a fraction of total assets as the top 1,000 firms in 1941.[13] Economic society today is strikingly characterized by what Robert Averitt has called a Center—a small number of very large and powerful industrial units—and a Periphery —a very large number of generally small and weak firms.[14]

[13] Blair, *op. cit.*, chap. 4.
[14] Robert T. Averitt, *The Dual Economy* (New York: Norton, 1968).

It should be noted that we are far from understanding the dynamics of this two-sector division with regard to the performance of the system as a whole. The oligopolistic Center has been shown to be the source of much economic inefficiency and perhaps of inflationary pressures;[15] the sprawling Periphery has been identified by at least one student as the main source of business instability.[16] More important, but even less well understood, are the extent and nature of the linkages that bind the Center and political power structure. That linkages exist has been amply demonstrated, but the direction in which power flows (*from* the economic *to* the political structure, or vice versa) is unclear or perhaps unstable.[17] That is not a problem for this paper. What I rather wish to stress is the existence of an economic concentrate allied in some fashion with a political concentrate—a state of affairs that is not basically different from that which existed under "industrial" society, and which can, incidentally, be seen as well in the economic-political ententes of Japan, France, Germany, and other candidates for entry into the postindustrial realm.[18]

The development of a "postindustrial" configuration of employment or education does not seem likely to undo this characteristic of economic concentration. Rather, it seems probable that the concentration process will now proceed rapidly in the burgeoning service sector, where significant inroads have already been made (as is also the case in agriculture, still by far the least

[15] Blair, *op. cit.*, p. 152, ff., and *passim.*
[16] Howard Sherman, *Radical Political Economy* (New York: Basic Books, 1972), pp. 110, 113–14.
[17] For a few studies of these linkages see: AEA *Proceedings*, 1972, pp. 279–318, esp. articles by Kaufman and Melman; Robert Engler, *The Politics of Oil* (New York: Macmillan, 1971); G. Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism* (Glencoe, Ill., and New York: Free Press, 1963); H. Kariel, *The Decline of American Pluralism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961).
[18] See A. Shonfield, *Modern Capitalism* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1965).

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concentrated sector). We tend to picture the service sector as comprised of large numbers of independent proprietorships (lawyers, self-employed, one-man enterprises); but in fact a considerable proportion of employment in this sector is already provided by monopolistic or oligopolistic units. Of roughly 44 million employed in the service sector in 1970 (not including utilities or transportation), 13 million were in government, 15 million in trade, 4 million in finance (banking, insurance, brokerage, real estate). By comparison with the manufacturing sector, these are all relatively unconcentrated industries, but in terms of *absolute size of units,* the large firm, with its bureaucratic organization, is increasingly evident. A mere 29 retail chains, for instance, control a fifth of all assets in trade; the predominance and growth of large banks and insurance companies is well-known (the top 50 banks account for a third of all banking employment; the top 50 insurance companies for almost half of all employment in that field). *Thus the organizational character of industrial capitalism, with its hierarchies, bureaucracies, and above all its trend toward concentration, seems likely to continue in the postindustrial society.*

Next, we find the distribution of wealth and income little if at all disturbed by the types of changes we have discussed. Many studies have shown the extraordinary stability of income-shares accruing to the top and bottom deciles in the United States;[19] the top 10 percent of family units receiving about 30 percent of income, the bottom 30 percent less than one-tenth of income. These shares have remained roughly constant, or have inclined slightly toward inequality during the late decade, in which the effects of the postindustrial changes might have been expected to reveal their influence.

More significant is the stubborn continuation and defense of the extreme concentration of wealth in the top 1 or 2 percent of family units who collectively own about a third of *all* wealth. Control of corporate wealth—by far the most strategic item of wealth—is much more tightly centered, with about two-thirds of such wealth in the hands of 0.2 percent of all families.[20] In passing, it might be remarked that this extreme concentration of control is not peculiar to capitalism—it could no doubt be found under feudalism and (insofar as power can be used as a proxy for wealth) under existing forms of socialism. What is specifically capitalist about the phenomenon is the focus of control on corporate enterprise; and there is no sign that this concentration or its focus will diminish appreciably in a postindustrial setting, although the wealth-holding elites may recruit newcomers from the scientific-technological community.

Finally, we pass from structure to function. We have already noted that the more extreme destabilizing tendencies of capitalism now seem to be faced with rough-and-ready remedies. Let us only add that the specific features of postindustrialism that we have heretofore discussed—the sectoral shift and the increased education input—are not in themselves the source of any stabilizing tendencies (although one might claim that the defensive weaponry of macroeconomics is itself in part a product of the knowledge input of our time). However successfully we may have obviated the threat of mass unemployment and catastrophic income decline, there is scant evidence as yet that postindustrial society has solved problems that reflect the capitalist *modus oper-*

[19] See G. Kolko, *Wealth and Power in America* (New York: Praeger, 1962). Also Ackerman, Birnbaum, Wetzler, and Zimbalist, "The Extent of Income Inequality in the United States" in *The Capitalist System,* eds. R. Edwards, M. Reich, T. Weisskopf (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972).

[20] R. Lampman, *The Share of Top Wealth Holders in National Wealth 1922–56* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 24.

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andi. Inflation has replaced deflation, but the one, like the other, is surely a market phenomenon. A massive misallocation of resources, visible especially in the decay of the cities, has taken public priority over mass unemployment; but once again the fault lies with the failure of the market mechanism and the special constraints of private ownership. Specifically "capitalist" relations with the underdeveloped world seem to have worsened in the most recent period, or perhaps we should simply say that the capitalist problem of "imperialism" has reemerged to a central position.

All these elements suggest that whatever else we may say about the postindustrial future, *we should consider it as a stage of capitalism and not as a step "beyond" capitalism*. The stage may display new endemic characteristics and problems—indeed, I shall next turn to an exploration of what these may be—but it must also be expected to manifest many of the structural attributes of industrial capitalism, including concentrated economic power and wealth, a highly unequal distribution of pre (and probably post) tax income, and macro-malfunctions and misallocations of resources that arise from the predominance of the market as the principal allocatory mechanism.

II

Shall we then dismiss the idea of a "postindustrial" society as a chimera? That is not my intention. Just as late industrial capitalism differs in striking and significant ways from the small-scale capitalism of Adam Smith's day, so it is probable that the "postindustrial" trends within contemporary capitalism are pushing in directions that also portend substantial change.

Let me therefore turn the coin over and review the evidence I have just marshalled in order to factor out those elements that seem to me particularly freighted with change. The first of these, we will remember, had to do with the sectoral relocation of the work force away from the farm through the factory and into the office. Is it possible to generalize about the effects of such a massive relocation, particularly when one takes into account the extraordinary heterogeneity of tasks contained within the service sector? [21]

One such generalization is self-evident, but none the easier to interpret. It is a far-reaching change in the character of what we call, or think of, as "work." Like industrial man, postindustrial man is divorced from knowledge of the most fundamental provisioning activities of society: the seasons affect him only insofar as they determine his vacation time, the weather only as it upsets his travel plans or conditions his choice of clothing. Unlike industrial man, however, who also shares in this complete ignorance of the fundamental provisioning tasks, postindustrial man is no longer even familiar with the environment in which the great bulk of our industrial products originate. The bleak expanse of the factory wasteland, surrounded with its high, electrified fence; the clangor of the industrial shed, the dirty work clothes, the lunch pail, the grease, the grime, the dust that we find in most places of industrial work are missing from the store and the office. Changed, too, is the character of work supervision, away from factory whistles, check-ins, foremen. Service work, in all (or most) of its varieties is characterized by trim surroundings, neat dress or a prestigious uniform, constant exposure to a "clientele," coffee breaks, telephone calls. This is by no means all gain, although some of it is. The physical dangers of work are less; the psychological strains may be greater. The expenditure of physical effort is greatly reduced; that of psychic energies may be greatly increased.

It is difficult to know what conclusions

[21] Let me simply remind the reader that this sector includes the most highly bureaucratized elements of American life—the federal government—and the least bureaucratized—the individual proprietor or professional in the service trades or professions; very highly skilled tasks (surgeons) and very low-skilled (filing clerks); the very highly paid (entertainers) and the very poorly paid (servants).

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follow from this impressionistically drawn change in work milieu. For example, whether "alienation" is exacerbated or alleviated is a matter about which we cannot even make informed guesses, not least because of the variety of tasks embraced within the service sector. Yet, in full awareness of the frailty of such "sociologizing," let me hazard one conjecture that combines the changed work experience mentioned above with a second characteristic of the postindustrial world—namely, the lengthened and broadened exposure of its work force to formal education. The conjecture (it is perhaps too untestable to be dignified with the name of "hypothesis") is that the lengthened exposure to the "white-collar" atmosphere of the classroom tends to identify the expected characteristics of "work." That is, college prepares one not only intellectually, but experientially, for the store and the office rather than for the factory or the farm. I am aware, of course, of exceptions: agronomists, engineers, and a few similar professions. But in the main I think I am on firm ground in holding that education nurtures the association of "work" with reading, writing, and calculation, rather than with handling things. Thus the postindustrial society encourages what Veblen called a "trained incapacity" for "dirty work" among that ever-growing fraction of the population that pursues formal education through the college level. In passing, I should note that the smooth running of postindustrial society may hinge, even more than that of industrial society, on the presence of that "secondary" labor force (the drop-outs, casual labor-market participants, or exploited minorities) who continue to be available for the picking of fruit, the digging of ditches, the sweeping of floors, the washing of dishes.

Along with the new sense of what "work" means there comes, I think, a growing expectation of security in the world of work. A man or woman who has been relieved of virtually all economic necessity until the age of 21 or even 25 is reared in an environment in which some sort of economic provision, even if at a frugal level, is taken for granted. It would not be surprising if the graduates of the postindustrial educational institutions bring with them strong expectations that "work" is not a scarce privilege to be competed for, but a basic right—the normal reward for having completed the long training that society has enjoined. Guarantees of employment, security of tenure in work, the "right" to expect an uninterrupted flow of income are thus plausible consequences of the transition to a postindustrial occupational and educational framework. Perhaps this is nothing more than the diffusion among the great bulk of the population of attitudes that were formerly evident mainly among the upper decile.

Let me turn finally to another new attribute of the postindustrial world which also follows from the characteristics we have examined in our previous section. This concerns the problems of economic function and malfunction that a postindustrial society can expect to inherit from its precursor.

Here one major trend seems likely to be reinforced by the postindustrial system. This is the growth of business-state coordination at an overt rather than covert level. Business-state cooperation is, of course, as old as capitalism itself; it is the mythology rather than the reality of "laissez-faire," which has dominated the past century. Many forces within the postindustrial framework seem likely to diminish the strength of that mythology, and to strengthen the tendencies toward open coordination. The importance of maintaining an adequate level of aggregate demand in the face of widespread expectations of "guaranteed white-collar work," of remedying the disruptive effects of the misallocation of resources, and of dealing with the problems of an economic system increasingly polarized between a Center and a Periphery all seem likely to increase the need for, and the political acceptibility of, some kind of "planning." No doubt the form and functions of this planning will display differing reaches and effectiveness in various societies with

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their particular ideological, traditional, and structural differences. But in all postindustrial systems I would anticipate something that might be described as a "corporate state" —that is, a state in which the activities of the Center and the state are brought into compatible paths, in which the risks and instabilities of the Periphery are offset, or at least partially underwritten, and in which acceptable resource allocation is attacked by coordinated action between the public and private sectors.

In suggesting that the changeful elements of the postindustrial trend will encourage overt planning, I do not mean to imply that the politicoeconomic problems of this stage of capitalism will necessarily be easier to solve than those of industrial capitalism. The difficulties of controlling inflation may well be greater than those of overcoming depression, both to diagnose and to cope with politically. The power of the moderately affluent middle classes, and of the service-sector located work force may prove more troublesome for a viable "incomes policy" than the wage-determination in an industrial setting (the recent experience in the municipal sectors is a case in point).[22] No less of a difficult problem for the macromanagement of the postindustrial system may be that of persuading the majority of income recipients, whose incomes lie in the fourth income decile and up, to relinquish substantial sums for the benefit of the poor who are to be found in the bottom three deciles. All these problems seem likely to add further impetus to the overall drift toward business-state planning to which we have already pointed.

[22] Joan Robinson has suggested (in *Economic Heresies* [New York: Basic Books, 1971], p. 93) that control over the price level ultimately depends on the acquiescence of the population in a "traditional" set of hierarchical gradations, so that the determination of a few key wage bargains in fact settles the aggregate wage bill. The increasing "white collar" nature of work and the greater educational exposure of the majority may lessen this means of internalized control, unleashing a "free-for-all" race which no mechanism other than outright controls will be able to restrain.

III

Heretofore I have been discussing the postindustrial society from two points of view: first, analyzing the inadequacies of certain views concerning the term; second, suggesting the kernel of truth that resides in these views. Now I wish to proceed in a somewhat different direction. First, I wish to inquire into two structural or transformational stresses to which postindustrial society will be subject, beyond those that we have already identified. Finally, I will ask the much more difficult question as to the social consequences we can anticipate as following from these changes.

What further *economic* changes can be expected from the trajectory out of agrarian, through industrial, into the service-centered, education-intensive system we call "postindustrial"? Two such changes appear integrally connected with this trajectory, although as we shall see, the connections are not the same in each case.

The first change has to do with the progressive mechanization of work—that is, with the further development of the very force that lies behind the trajectory of economic transformation itself. There is no doubt that technology is the major element in bringing about the sectoral migration of the labor force, for it has been the widening "technicization" of rural and then factory work that has released the manpower that has flowed into the tertiary areas of the economy.[23] We do not fully understand the reason for the

[23] A brief technical footnote seems necessary here. Technology releases the manpower, but its migration into another sector thereafter depends on the demand for commodities originating in the various sectors. Had the demand for agricultural output been extremely elastic, the release of labor through mechanization would have resulted only in a much vaster increase in total farm output than we have in fact experienced. The same applies to manufacturing. It is not only technology, but the inelasticity of demand for "food" (Engels's Law) and the approximately unitary elasticity for manufactured goods that have resulted in the precipitous fall in rural employment and the secular steadiness of manufacturing employment.

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particular sequence of technology that has given us this shift and cannot therefore make firm predictions with respect to the future. But every indication is that invention and innovation will be proportionately more concentrated on the tasks performed in the service sector. This seems likely for three reasons: (1) we are reaching the limits of labor displacement in agriculture (although there remains a small group that can still be dispossessed from their jobs in that sector); (2) almost three-quarters of a century of invention and innovation within the industrial core has left the proportion of the labor force relatively unchanged, as we have seen, and we can therefore assume that if the same general forces of technology and demand continue, there will not be significant labor displacement from this sector; and (3) the most "attractive" sector for the introduction of machinery lies in the heretofore technically "neglected" service area.[24] In this sector labor costs are high, productivity low, and a new level of technological capability begins to bring many heretofore "unmechanizable" tasks within the reach of machinery: as a result we have the vending machine for the counter man; the self-service store for the clerk; the programmed lathe, the automatic check-reader, the omnipresent computer.

What will be the effect of this further mechanization? The answer hinges entirely on the elasticity of demand for the services produced in this sector. If demand swells *pari passu* with the increased productivity per service worker that will result from "automation," then the service sector may continue to absorb its present 60–65 percent of the labor force. If demand swells more rapidly, or if technology enters more slowly, employment in this sector may rise still further in both absolute and percentage terms. It is also possible that the demand for "services," like that for "manufactures," will ultimately reach "satiety." In more concrete terms, there may be a limit as to the amount of government services, retail-trade services, education, recreation, financial advice, etc., that a man wants at a given income level; and that the "amount" of services (measured in the dollars we spend for them) may not rise as rapidly as income rises.

In that case, where will the displaced labor go? Several possibilities for adjustment are available. One is the creation of a public employment sector designed to create employment for those displaced from the service area. This sector need not itself be within the tertiary sector, but might embrace subsidized small farming, labor-intensive subsidized handicraft, labor-intensive public construction, etc. A second possibility is the deliberate steady reduction in the work force, achieved partly by further extending the compulsory years of schooling, partly by reducing retirement ages, partly by shortening the work week. A third possibility is the extension of the transfer mechanism to permit a certain proportion of the young working-age population to live without work, at socially determined subsistence levels, if it so chooses.

All these adjustments—the need for which hinges, let me repeat, on the unpredictable rate of technological displacement and the shift in the demand for various services—portend considerable strains on the "traditional" capitalist mechanism. They imply a high degree of that over-all plannification of which I spoke earlier. They imply as well new strains on the macroprocesses of a system in which the historic underpinning identified by both Marx and Weber—a propertyless class of workers—has been replaced by a class of workers which, however "propertyless," are not *forced* to sell their labor power at the prevailing market rate. It would be foolhardy to assert that an economic system operating under the constraints of "capitalist" ideologies and institutions cannot make these adjustments—one has but to consider the

[24] See J. Schmookler, *Invention and Economic Growth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966) for evidence of the role of demand in directing the course of technological discovery and application.

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very great degree of social adaptation displayed by the capitalist nations of Scandinavia. But the basic nature of the challenge of mechanization is nonetheless clear. The postindustrial society is likely to be faced with a "redundancy" of labor owing to the progressive incursion of mechanization into the service sector; and this redundancy—if it is not absorbed by a spontaneous growth of private demand for "services"—will require intervention into the market process on a far-reaching scale.

A second dimension of the mechanization problem has already engaged our attention. This is the effect of "automation" on the psychophysical process of "work" itself. We have already seen that the displacement of "muscular" by "intellectual" labor is one of the main attributes of postindustrialization. Even at the simplest level—the man behind the tractor wheel instead of behind the hoe, behind the adding machine instead of behind the ledger, behind the computerized lathe instead of behind the chuck lathe—the nature of human effort in postindustrial society is given a supervisory, rather than directly "active," aspect. This change in the existential and experiential character of labor offers rich ground for speculation, but little substantial basis for extraeconomic prediction. We return at the conclusion to this problem of social forecasting.

A second structural challenge to be faced by the postindustrial world is the problem of ecological adjustment that must be faced over the coming decades—a problem that will steadily grow in intensity as population densities rise, pollution accumulates, and resources become depleted.

The dimensions of the ecological problem are ultimately very great and its restrictive implications severe. What is at question is the time scale during which adjustment can be made and the degree of technological adaptation that can be achieved.[25] At stake is the level of qualitative well-being, the rate of tolerable growth, and in the end the viability of the planet itself as a human habitat. It need hardly be said that the ecological threat affects not just the "postindustrial" world, but all nations, albeit in different fashions and at varying time schedules. In terms of the immediate impact on the quality of life, it may well be the most developed nations, with their high rate of pollution and their voracious consumption of resources, that stand to be the first affected.

When the ecological problem arrives "in earnest," it will pose an acute problem for postindustrial societies. We have already called attention to the presence and the undoubted continuing importance of the industrial core which, together with the agricultural sector, supports the tertiary activities of the postindustrial world. The problem, then, is the extent to which the expansive drive of a capitalist mechanism, expressed through the acquisitive and accumulatory behavior of its corporations, can be given an appropriate area in which to manifest itself, if unrestricted growth within the industrial sector becomes impermissible for environmental reasons.

Of the many new sources of tension and malfunction within the postindustrial world, this looming constriction of the expansive drive within the industrial sector seems among the most difficult of solution. The export of capital, a major means of venting the expansive drive in the past, becomes less open, owing to environmental problems of pollution in the other developed countries (which are currently most attractive to capital), and to political problems in the underdeveloped world. To what extent the expansive international momentum of capitalism can be diverted to the areas of services is an uncertain question, but not one that seems especially promising, as the various "service" occupations are now defined.

There is no point in attempting to guess to what degree industrial companies will be able to move into such fields as entertain-

[25] See, Robert Heilbroner, "Growth and Survival," *Foreign Affairs*, October 1972, and (with J. Allentuck) "Ecological Balance and the Stationary State," *Journal of Land Economics*, October 1972.

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ment, travel, personal services and the like. What is important to bear in mind is that some form of "growth," with all its money illusions and its mixture of "goods" and "bads," is an indispensable means of lessening the tensions generated by the need to divide the total product between wages and property income. In a postindustrial society in which industrial expansion were necessarily constrained because of ecological hazards, and in which the large corporation had not found a satisfactory means of penetrating the service occupations, we could expect serious stresses to manifest themselves—a fall in profit rates and/or a much more acrimonious struggle over the division of the social product. Whether "capitalism" could adjust to such a situation is moot—in the opinion of economists as different in orientation as Marx and Keynes it could not—but in all likelihood such a trend would accelerate the tendency toward the "managerialization" of the public-private corporate state to which other tendencies, discussed above, now point.

IV

We have already indulged in sufficient speculation with regard to the socioeconomic characteristics of the postindustrial world, and the temptation is to conclude on a note of solid empiricism. Yet I shall resist this temptation in order to explore one last highly conjectural area that seems inescapable in any consideration of what the future may be like.

This is the classic problem of the economic "base" and the noneconomic "superstructure"—a problem that finds its starkest expression in Marx, but that can be traced back to the Scottish Historical School. For a fact that must be admitted in all our conjecturings about the shape of things to come is that we reveal ourselves, wittingly or otherwise, to be economic determinists—indeed, even technological determinists. To put it differently, all speculation about postindustrialism assumes that the causal line of inference runs *from* the economic changes *to* the political and social changes, and although feedbacks may be discussed (such as the drive toward plannification) the *primum mobile* of "prediction" is the economic dynamic of social evolution.

This primacy of economic dynamics has nothing to do with ideology. It arises because we can discern "lawlike" motions within the economic sphere that have no counterparts in the political and social realms. However indistinct and blurred, these motions can nonetheless be described and, moreover, within broad limits their interactions can be deduced. One of these lawlike motions is the drive for profits characteristic of a capitalist system. Although this drive does not produce the determinate "equilibrium" solutions of neoclassical economics,[26] it nonetheless permits us to anticipate with a fair degree of certainty such types of behavior as the search for cost-reducing technology, the concentration of business enterprise (whether for reasons of efficiency or profitable financial manipulation), the probable advent of economies of scale in industries that have not yet been "invaded" by technology, the crucial role to be played by autonomous public and private expenditures magnified by a "multiplier" of reasonably known dimensions, and still other regularities.

I hasten to stress the extreme tenuousness of our knowledge in all these fields. Short-run economic prediction, based on presumptively "known" behavioral functions and technical constraints, has been shown to be egregiously faulty. But this constraint does not apply with quite the same force to the longer run, when the persistent trends of economic life assert themselves over their short-term vagaries.[27] Hence to whatever extent we dare to predict the contours of postindustrial society, it is perforce on the basis of these economic projections. For what

[26] On this point see especially the discussion by Adolph Lowe, *On Economic Knowledge* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965, 1970).

[27] See Robert Heilbroner, "On the Limits of Economic Prediction," *Between Capitalism and Socialism* (New York: Random House, 1970).

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"lawlike" statements can we apply to the organization of political affairs, to social organization, to changes in cultural life-style, and the like? Apart from a few descriptive generalizations—Michels' "iron law" of oligarchy, Weber's description of bureaucratic organization, Freud's or Erikson's outline of the topography of the psyche and its developmental stages—what do the other social sciences have to offer by way of predictive theory? The answer I fear is, discouragingly little. Thus, however inaccurate or inadequate the economic determinist view may be, it is foisted upon us as an initial mode of viewing the future for lack of any alternative "positive" approach.

This raises very grave problems for social scientists. Not only are the "laws of motion" of economics extremely imprecise, but the linkages between any given economic structure and its interlocked political and social accouterments are even more difficult to describe with any degree of assurance. I must confess to a suspicion that if postindustrial society follows the general economic trajectory I have described, it will be accompanied by a more authoritarian political structure, by more anomic groups in the undereducated, by increasing restlessness and boredom among the educated "middle classes" still subject to the stimuli of a competitive, acquisitive culture. But this is only conjecture; perhaps one can draw equally or more convincing scenarios of greater stability, communal morale, individual fulfillment.

In this situation of extreme indeterminacy a key may be provided by what Adolph Lowe has identified as the mood of the times—certainly of the postindustrial age. He calls this "the end of social fatalism." [28] By this he means the end of an age in which not only the events of nature but the events of society are taken as "givens," to be mutely accepted by the uncomplaining masses or explained away in terms of a theological or a political religion.

If this identification of a profound change in mood is true—and I believe that it is—perhaps our view of the future as something to be "predicted" is fundamentally at variance with the realities of the age. In an era that has rejected social fatalism, the future will no longer "arrive," but it will be *made,* however crudely, cruelly, or well by the harnessing of political wills and their focusing on deliberately chosen goals. It may therefore be quite mistaken to search, within economics or in its sister disciplines, for "positive" perspectives on a future that will not come into being by the workings of "lawlike" mechanisms (although it may be influenced by their residual influence), but by the political selection of social goals whose means of attainment then become the subject for social scientific investigation.[29]

This leaves open, of course, the choice of goals. About this all-important question the social scientist has nothing to say, either as counselor or as expert "prognosticator." Perforce he relinquishes his place to the moral philosopher—his historical godfather —whose task it is to raise the consciousness of men to the alternatives open to them. The goals once chosen, the social scientist again comes into his own in the more modest, but nonetheless important, role of social "engineer." If there is one ultimate definition for postindustrial society, then, I would suggest, it is that stage of socioeconomic organization in which men gradually escape from the thralldom of blind mechanisms to enter the perilous, but potentially liberating, terrain in which human beings finally assert themselves, for better or worse, as the masters of their fate. □

[28] Adolph Lowe, "Is Present Day Higher Education 'Relevant'?," *Social Research,* Fall 1971.
[29] See again the work of Lowe, *op. cit.,* and my essay "On the Possibility of a Political Economics," *Journal of Economic Issues,* December 1970.

The author, who is Norman Thomas Professor at the New School for Social Research, delivered this paper at a conference sponsored by the Japan Society and the Johnson Foundation. The paper appears here with the kind permission of the Japan Society.

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Murray Hausknecht

The Finished World of George Meany

The day following the 1972 election, George Meany said that the voters "have shown that they want peace in Vietnam, but not surrender and not dishonor." Institutions are predictable and sometimes very much like natural phenomena; Meany on the elections is like seeing a cycle of the seasons. So predictable, in fact, that we often neglect to ask why they work as they do and how they came to be that way.

Meany has never been a journalist's dream. Successfully resisting all attempts to invade his private life, he has apparently never been tempted to use public-relations techniques for the creation of a "public image." But, for some reason that still remains a mystery to Joseph C. Goulden, Meany decided to talk to him at great length about his career and the organization he heads.[1] Although still highly protective of his private life, he encouraged others to talk to Goulden and gave him access to AFL-CIO records. Since Goulden is neither a historian nor a labor journalist, the fat book he has produced comes very close to being an authorized Life and Organizational Times of George Meany. I suspect that Goulden's lack of a labor background may have been a major attraction for Meany.

The conventional picture of Meany is that of a union leader who has never led a strike—a plodding, bureaucratic fat cat as compared to a flamboyant, charismatic figure manning the picket lines. If the latter image suggests Walter Reuther and other early CIO leaders, then, perhaps, the difference may be something more fundamental. For the critical element is not the strike experience but participation in creating an organization at a given time in history. The meaning of a union and the significance of one's place in the labor movement must be very different for a Reuther and a Meany. This difference becomes clear by recalling that the Plumbers, who issued Meany's union card, signed a master agreement establishing a closed shop in New York in 1886! When Meany won his first union office in 1919, he entered a relatively stable world. It was sharply different from the world of the men who organized the Steelworkers and the Automobile Workers in the 1930s, and it makes Meany a different man with a different experience.

Meany is an early example of a career in labor. Meany's—as many an occupational career—points to the influence of a parental model; his father had been an officer of the Plumbers' local in New York. Three years after his father's death, Meany was elected to the local's executive board, and thereafter his history was a series of upward steps: business agent, then secretary of the New York Building Trades Council, member of the executive board of the New York State Federation of Labor, president of the State Federation, secretary-treasurer of the AFL, and finally, president of the AFL–CIO. How career dovetails with organizational experi-

[1] Joseph C. Goulden, *Meany: The Unchallenged Strong Man of American Labor* (New York: Atheneum, 1972).

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ence is suggested by one of the few anecdotes about the private Meany. When he was offered the job of secretary–treasurer his wife, reluctant to leave New York, was unenthusiastic:

> I finally said, "Well, you know this *is* a promotion. There's no question about it. The second biggest job in the labor movement. This is my life, you know". . . . The more I thought about it, the more I felt it was something I just couldn't say no to. It wasn't a question of salary, but of promotion.

Career means order and continuity. In Meany's case a good deal of the continuity is accounted for by the influence of his first full-time position as business agent.

IN THE CONSTRUCTION TRADES each local has a master agreement with an association of employers. In addition to clauses about wages and hours, the contract contains regulative clauses specifying how the work is to be done and the restrictive or "featherbedding" clauses. Enforcement of the contract is in the hands of the business agent, an elected official often the only paid officer of a local. In the construction industry, where workers are scattered in small work units, the business agent performs the functions of the industrial plant's shop steward. But unlike the latter, the business agent is the main channel of employment, since the agreement calls for contractors to secure their workers through him. Thus for the rank-and-file member the business agent is "the union": he is instrumental in getting a member a job; he is looked to for settling on-the-job problems with the employer; he also may be the only union official a member sees with any regularity.

To be a successful business agent requires the skills of a successful politician. In dealing with employers

> business agents depend to a considerable extent upon "spontaneous militancy" from their members. When this is lacking, the position of the business agent is considerably weaker. . . . Many seemingly spontaneous strikes are instigated by the business agent or have his benevolent approval. However . . . really unauthorized wildcat strikes can be very embarrassing. . . . If a business agent cannot control his members, employers will ignore him and bargain individually with their men." [2]

Yet, if members lack militancy and are fearful of their employers, they become more dependent upon the business agent to protect their interests. This dependency is not unwelcome to the business agent; it enhances his power vis-à-vis potential internal rivals. Sometimes, indeed, the established relationship between an employer and the business agent can be used by the latter to reward his friends and punish his enemies. A study of labor relations in the Chicago construction industry during the first three decades of the century notes that "once in office, business agents tend to remain there. Like all politicians they build effective machines." [3] Only in Chicago, perhaps, are they effective, but in another city a construction teamsters' business agent "advertises his activities by insistently honking his horn at all construction trucks he passes." [4]

According to Meany's contemporaries he was an effective business agent. They (and Meany) regaled Goulden with anecdotes of his successful enforcement of the contract and his triumphs in jurisdictional battles. The members of his local were not a particularly militant lot: the Plumbers, a contemporary reports, "wanted no fights or troubles." If present-day evidence is a reliable guide, this suggests that the Plumbers' passivity was an important element in Meany's political success in the union. Unfortunately, there is no direct evidence about

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[2] George Strauss, "Control by the Membership in Building Trades Unions," *American Journal of Sociology*, May 1956, p. 531.
[3] Royal E. Montgomery, *Industrial Relations in the Chicago Building Trades* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), p. 212.
[4] Strauss, *op. cit.*, p. 533.

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internal politics, although Goulden points to the importance of the experience as a business agent. Both he and Meany would like us to believe that he abstained from politics: "Meany decided early on to avoid intraunion politics whenever possible. . . ." Yet he was the complete politician: in 1934 he ran for the presidency of the State Federation, and his base of support was in the New York City trade unions:

> So the first campaign . . . was to get the locals to pay their dues [making them eligible to send delegates to the convention]. . . . The next thing we done, we started to figure out how we were going to get those delegates to Buffalo. So we run a Saturday afternoon party in Throgs Neck. . . . And we collected money from the business agents, ten dollars here, fifteen dollars there.

Americana: the practical politician at work counting his votes, getting his people to the polls, squeezing his backers for the extra buck.

During the Depression, Meany learned new skills. Herbert H. Lehman, Roosevelt's successor as governor, had run with the formal endorsement of the State Federation. In effect, Meany became labor's chief lobbyist for New Deal legislation on the state level. Labor working closely with the Democratic party on a mutually determined program is now a political commonplace, but in that era it was an innovation. In New York, at least, Meany was an important figure in forging this historic new relationship between labor and the parties.

His early experience of politics in the union and outside it suggests some resemblance to that of the old-style machine politician. As an official of the State Federation, Meany's "forte was the give-and-take of face-to-face negotiations, the business agent technique of persuasion and blunt talk. . . " —or the technique of the old pol who lives in a world of personal relationships based on an exchange of favors. This world is always threatened, on the one hand, by the rise of bureaucratic modes of organization with its universalistic norms and, on the other, by enthusiasms that subordinate organization, relationships, and proximate interests to the overriding demands of some transcendent goal. Although the first threat had become a real one by the time Meany entered the national arena, the way he moved from New York to Washington was characteristic of old-time politics.

By 1939 the AFL was not doing well in competition with the CIO; politically, it was ineffective. The Federations's president, William Green, was a weak man, and its 79-year-old secretary-treasurer, Frank Morrison, had held the job since 1896. Dan Tobin of the Teamsters and William Hutcheson of the Carpenters decided it was time for a change and tapped Meany as Morrison's successor. Meany, though, was reluctant: " 'I'm no damn fool to run against a fellow who's held the job for forty-four years, and to run just because he happens to be seventy-nine years of age.' 'Well,' Tobin said, 'He'll get out, we'll give him a pension.' " Such sentiments, which did credit to everyone concerned as men and politicians, are inconceivable where bureaucratic rules are dominant or where ideological fervor takes over.

Green was originally scheduled to be dumped along with Morrison, but Tobin and Hutcheson were unable to muster enough support for that part of the program. Consequently, Green was able to block Meany from taking an active organizational role, particularly as a lobbyist, the activity for which he had acquired a strong taste in New York. So great was his frustration, he was about to return to New York when the war broke out. The war gave him some opportunity, through service on the War Labor Board, to enter the political arena. On the WLB he was involved in protecting labor interests in the face of wage-and-price controls, attempts to curb the right to strike and further organize—all issues that allowed

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maximum play for the talents of a former business agent.

The one area in which Meany was able to operate with almost no restraint was international affairs. Given his personal background as an Irish Catholic skilled construction worker, there is a certain inevitability to the rigid, oversimplistic anti-Communism now characteristic of AFL policy. But the dirty alliances with conservative and reactionary forces in South America and the equally disgraceful relationship with the CIA were not, perhaps, inevitable. To be sure, Meany denies even knowing of the existence of the CIA before 1955, but this degree of innocence is not credited by Goulden.

The CIA connection is reminiscent of something in the old-style political world from which Meany emerged. The first relationships were established with intelligence agencies during World War II, and the war justified the cooperative ties. After the war one of the major objectives of AFL policy was "to insure AFL recognition as the only spokesman for American workers in international labor organizations. . . the AFL wanted to deny the rival CIO any recognition as a coequal federation. . . ."Just as business agents use relationships with employers to fight off challenges to their political positions in the unions, so Meany may have been tempted by the presence of the CIA. That is, given the antagonism between CIO and AFL, and the reinforcing element of anti-Communism, it is not difficult to see how Meany could allow his subordinates to drift into working with the CIA.

But the most severe problems of the AFL were domestic and internal. Shortly after Meany became president of the AFL, state investigatory bodies began to publicize corruption in the International Longshoremen's Association. Later, there were scandals in the Teamsters involving Dave Beck and Jimmy Hoffa. Although the situation in the ILA and the Teamsters cannot have been completely unknown to Meany, he took action only when corruption became the basis for attacks by outside forces on the Federation as a whole. In large measure, Meany was simply concerned with how to fend off these external forces rather than with the structural conditions that made corruption endemic in certain unions. Thus, when Dave Beck was expelled from the executive council of the AFL, Meany explained to his fellow members, "The big question is what we must do at this point from the standpoint of public relations."

The issue of corruption and its use as a weapon by unfriendly outsiders is not a new problem: after all, it was this kind of issue that helped keep the old-style municipal machines in constant trouble. But the civil rights movement posed a somewhat different problem.

The AFL record on racial discrimination was never a good one, and the only voice in defense of the black minority was that of A. Philip Randolph. He was a lonely voice, because any attempt to eliminate discrimination in the AFL could entail political conflicts within the affiliates that might threaten local structures of power. While anticorruption measures might affect specific leaders but not necessarily the structure of political power, antidiscrimination measures, which would permit the entrance of a new segment of the working class, could be more menacing to the way power was organized. Thus, when Randolph objected in 1956 to the admission of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers to the AFL-CIO on the grounds that blacks were excluded from membership, Meany accused him of raising a "high moral flag" and expressed confidence "that he could persuade the firemen to drop their color bar once they were in the AFL–CIO." Three years later, the Firemen still hadn't done so, and when Randolph attacked them at an AFL convention, Meany responded by saying, "Who the hell appointed you the guardian of all Negroes in America?"

The basis for Meany's anger became even clearer after Randolph formed the Negro

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American Labor Council in 1960 and continued to attack racism in the unions. Meany "accused Randolph and the NALC of 'harassing our affiliates' with public statements." Randolph was working with those outside labor to put pressure on the unions, and this was what set Meany off. But Randolph was not to be deterred, and in 1961 he proposed to the council of the AFL–CIO "a blockbuster which Meany well knew could blow the AFL–CIO into public turmoil over the race issue." It was a memorandum attacking the organization for "tokenism in civil rights" and calling for a meeting between Meany and black leaders to find ways of working together in such fields as voter registration. Meany "thoroughly disagreed with the charges in the report, but he was unwilling to have Randolph spread it before an AFL–CIO convention. Hence he moved deftly to cut the ground from under Randolph in a way that satisfied Randolph's demands, but also made Randolph the loser in terms of AFL–CIO politics." The net result of Meany's "deftness" was that the executive council voted to censure Randolph. Meany then, according to Goulden, moved to put into effect many of the measures Randolph advocated. Predictably, though, "there was little positive accomplishment."

Despite all this, it is a mistake to see Meany as a hard-bitten reactionary on racial matters. For this view ignores the simple fact that the strong support of organized labor was probably responsible for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with its strong antidiscrimination-in-employment clause. Perhaps, paradoxically, a resolution of the contradiction can be found in Meany's refusal to participate in the March on Washington, either personally or as the official representative of American labor. "Meany did not like the idea. He did not want the AFL–CIO 'to be identified with a public demonstration initiated by others and over which the AFL–CIO has no control.' "

The March can be likened to "a really unauthorized wildcat strike"—a form of militancy over which a business agent "has no control" and which undercuts his capacity to dominate a situation. Militancy is acceptable as long as it can be channeled in a way that does not endanger the organization or one's power within it. The March on Washington represented forces that were not easily subject to control, but, at the same time, forces with which one had to come to terms. One of the virtues of the Civil Rights Act was that it would institutionalize the forces represented by the March; that is, it would put the enforcement of civil rights into the hands of government bureaus. But bureaus and bureaucrats by their very nature are respectful of the political clout of large organizations. Dealing with a government bureau is very much like dealing with an employer: negotiations are the order of the day, and so there is a measure of control.

THIS LOGIC may also apply to Meany's desertion of the Democratic party in the last election. From Meany's perspective the McGovern forces would bear considerable resemblance, in more ways than one, to the civil rights forces. At the convention they had the initiative, and consequently labor couldn't exercise its customary degree of control. But something more may have been involved, and here the war issue becomes relevant.

No doubt even Meany now recognizes that we must get out of Vietnam. However, McGovern's proposal for unilateral withdrawal was deeply antipathetic—ideological issues aside—to someone raised on the old-style politics, someone whose entire professional and political life has been geared to the striking of bargains. A man who would simply leave Vietnam without negotiations was a man who cannot be trusted, because negotiations are the mutual recognition of the legitimacy of the parties' interests and claims. The process of negotiation means that neither party has sole control of the

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resolution of the conflict. From this perspective, McGovern's desire for unilateral withdrawal was the very negation of politics.

Meany's view of politics is obviously influenced by his experience of the labor movement. When he became a union member, the Plumbers had staked out a claim for some control over their working lives, and this claim had been recognized as legitimate for a long time. An officer of the union had to protect that claim, and the "enemy" could be either employers or other workers challenging jurisdictional rights. Meany's world was a finished world, and his job was to protect it from those who would destroy it.

There is much to be said for this perspective. It does not disdain or sacrifice immediate needs, interests, and possible gains for transcendent goals. It recognizes that what little control workers have gained over their lives can easily be lost. And for men on the factory floor or construction site none of this is small or unimportant.

Unfortunately those who are outside that world, those who are black or Vietnamese, remain unrecognized. Ultimately one must pay some attention to them, but only if they can be fitted into the world as it already exists. The tragedy of Meany and, to an extent, of American labor as a whole is a failure to realize that the world is never finished and needs always to be remade. □

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Michael Harrington

The Politics of Tightrope

The article below is a slightly condensed version of a chapter from Michael Harrington's forthcoming book, to be published by the Saturday Review Press, in which he describes his political experiences over the last few decades. —ED.

The 1960s were a schizophrenic decade. During the first five years there were difficult struggles, but there was also a mood of hope, of possibility. The bloody exception was, of course, the assassination of John F. Kennedy. But even that horror had some positive consequences. It made Americans more sensitive to the best proposals that Kennedy had put forward and thereby was a major factor in the legislative victories of Lyndon Johnson.

Then, in 1965, came the massive escalation of the unconscionable war in Vietnam. There followed more than 40,000 American deaths, and the killing, maiming, and uprooting of millions of Vietnamese. In the United States, the war put an end to the hopes for a "Great Society," forced the effective retirement of Johnson from the presidency, and prepared the way for the election of Richard Nixon. As a result, black militancy was frustrated and turned to nationalism and separatism, while youthful idealism grew so alienated that many students became confrontationists and a few followed an insane logic all the way to terrorism. The last five years of the decade were in short an era of bad feeling in American life.

So the war touched every aspect of the society. It even tore apart that socialist microcosm in which I had lived for almost 15 years before the escalations of 1965. Comrades and friends of long standing, all of them with the shared experience of government harassment during the Joe McCarthy period, turned on one another. In 1964, we were a proud cadre that had played a significant role in the civil rights movement and that now was engaged in a serious dialogue with some of the best trade unionists. By 1970, we no longer existed as a group.

We were, to be sure, minor and nonviolent casualties of the tragedy in Southeast Asia. Yet our seemingly sectarian history may well help to illuminate some of the great public debates of the period. The questions over which we fought were the same ones that preoccupied major social movements a thousand times more powerful. But because we were small and unburdened by power, we were able to dispute those issues with that passionate scholasticism we had inherited from the Marxist tradition. So our differences were significant, not because they were unique or even original, but because they theorized and wrote large the policy conflicts that swirled about us.

There is, however, a personal problem in my treating the breakup of our socialist cadre as a symbolic moment of the 1960s. After I finished the first draft of this essay, Max Shachtman died. One of the crucial questions in my analysis is how Shachtman, a life-long Marxist, could have come to temporize over, and give de facto support to, the most senseless war in the history of this nation. When he died, I wondered if I should not give up working on an assessment that would have to be critical of his final years.

I decided to violate the principle of *de*

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mortuis, nil nisi bonum, for two reasons. First of all, Shachtman was a public man who had only contempt for those who, like the Trotskyists, turn a departed leader into an icon. He arrived at his conclusions about the war as an honorable man, a socialist and an idealist. That he was also tragically mistaken does not change those facts. I will, therefore, try to speak truthfully of the dead, not to denigrate Shachtman's memory, but to respect it in the only way I know.

Shachtman was a major figure in the intellectual history of Marxism even though his name and reputation were unknown outside the world of American socialism. An intense, brilliant man who devoted his entire being to his ideals, he was never afraid of lonely and unpopular positions when he thought them necessary. He became a Communist militant, youth leader, and *Daily Worker* editor in the early 1920s when the CP was being hounded by all the forces of law and order. In 1928, he became a Trotskyist and braved the libels—and physical assaults—of his former comrades. And even when he gave critical support to the American intervention in Vietnam—and was, in my opinion, tragically wrong—he was disregarding the comfortable leftist verities in the name of what he took to be a more difficult truth.

In 1939, Max audaciously broke with Leon Trotsky. The American disciple, who had never led more than a small group of radicals, thus challenged the military leader of the October Revolution, one of the most ranging theorists Marxism has ever known, and certainly its finest writer of prose. The Russian Revolution, Shachtman said against Trotsky, had been expropriated. The nationalized means of production were not a guarantee of progressiveness, and the bureaucracy that administered them was not merely a caste that had usurped the rights of the workers. In Russia, Max argued, there was a new form of class society, neither capitalist nor socialist. He called it bureaucratic collectivism.

There were other socialist thinkers who perceived aspects of this truth: Trotsky's comrade and friend Christian Rakovsky was one of them; Leon Blum's adviser Lucien Laurat was another. But it was Max who developed this insight in the most disciplined theoretical fashion and who thereby, in some of the darkest days Marxism has ever known, upheld the honor of socialism's most profound intellectual tradition. It was a period when the victory of fascism and the defeat of socialism drove many to despair and passivity. Max fought back, brilliantly, valiantly. Throughout the 1940s, he was both a conscience and a luminous intellect for the movement.

He was a vibrant man who approached his political commitment with a real passion. Those of us who learned from him did not simply receive a gift of theory, of abstract ideas interspersed with the ritual citations from Marx and Engels. He communicated the spirit of the revolutionary tradition and when he spoke, history came alive. Yet he was not a ponderous man at all, but a person who often laughed until he cried.

So it was that in the very midst of our bitter dispute in the Socialist party in the early '70s I wrote in the acknowledgment to my book *Socialism* that "though I have some serious disagreements with him on issues of socialist strategy, I am permanently and deeply indebted to Max Shachtman, who first introduced me to the vision of democratic Marxism and whose theory of bureaucratic collectivism is so important to my analysis."

Second, and more important for the general reader, I am concerned to correct the mythology of the antiwar movement in which I participated. Some of the understandably outraged foes of the abomination in Vietnam have depicted a simple battle between the forces of peace and justice on one side and the war criminals and their political accomplices on the other. It was in reality much more complicated than that. Perhaps I can personalize that ethical complexity of the '60s by talking of good and decent com-

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rades, Max Shachtman among them, many of whom had proved their dedication in clashes more bitter than I have ever known, and who, in the name of excellent principles, were fundamentally wrong.

II

In 1964 and 1965 it seemed to us socialists that political realignment in America was about to come true. We focused our energies on building a new League for Industrial Democracy (LID). The '60s, we thought, were going to be a time of renewed reform, the first such period since the New Deal. The LID was to become a center for discussion among trade unionists, blacks, and intellectuals. It had been founded in 1905 by Upton Sinclair, Jack London, and Harry Laidler, and was closely associated with Norman Thomas in the 1920s and '30s. By the early '60s it was an aging remnant with some ideological and financial support from the needle trades' unions in New York. We proposed to revitalize it.

Our effort followed from our conception of coalition politics. No one group—not the unions, not the poor, not the intellectuals or the middle-class liberals and radicals—could transform American society on its own. There was a convergence of economic self-interest for the white working class and the impoverished minorities, since both stood to gain from full employment achieved through planned social investments. The LID, as we saw it, was to be located at the intersection of these various constituencies.

We began by broadening our contacts with the labor movements. Walter Reuther and Jack Conway, who then headed the Industrial Union Department of the AFL–CIO, started to help us; we were in touch with I. W. Abel, the new president of the Steelworkers, and with Lane Kirkland, then George Meany's right-hand man and now the secretary-treasurer of the AFL–CIO. We were perfectly aware that most Left theorists had written off Meany and his friends as conservatives and that some even regarded Reuther as too moderate. But we were determined to be truly radical: to involve ourselves with the leaders elected by the American workers themselves, rather than with those imaginary figures who should have led a revolutionary proletariat that did not exist. We had followed, or been involved with, too many fights in the labor movement to be ignorant of the dangers to socialist principles in making alliances with the trade union bureaucracy. Some of us had been sued for hundreds of thousands of dollars by Harry Bridges of the West Coast Longshoremen because of our support for some rank-and-filers. And Herman Benson, one of our best people, had already begun to become the most articulate champion of union democracy in America. But even though we understood the risks, we felt that a righteous isolation from the real labor movement was even worse than the dangers we were chancing.

We also turned toward new allies among the intellectuals. Irving Howe and several members of the editorial board of DISSENT joined the LID Board; so did some brilliant younger academics like S. M. Miller and Herbert Gans. Bayard Rustin was, of course, with us and he was still working closely with Martin Luther King, Jr. and Norman Hill, also on the Board, was one of the national leaders in CORE.

HARDLY HAD WE begun to act upon our new perspective, when the war in Vietnam began to escalate. In the first phase of American involvement in 1965, it was taken for granted among our socialist cadre that we were against Lyndon Johnson's intervention. We had, after all, spoken and demonstrated against American support of the French in Indochina in 1953 and 1954. As editor of the Socialist party newspaper, *New America,* I had argued against Kennedy's increases in troop strength in 1961 and 1962 on the grounds that reactionary anti-Communists, no matter how great the military aid they received, could never become an alternative to Communists who had won the leadership

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of a popular movement for national liberation.

In the fall of 1965 I went to Sane's antiwar rally and listened with pride and affection as Norman Thomas told the throng at the Washington Monument that he did not want to burn the American flag but rather to cleanse it of the stains of Vietnam. Both Bayard Rustin and I were sponsors of the march. Bayard had gone to federal prison for his pacifist convictions during World War II and risked his life in applying nonviolent tactics to the struggle against Jim Crow in the South. I had risked jail as a conscientious objector during the Korean War; and both of us felt ourselves part of the democratic peace movement.

One incident in that Washington demonstration bore upon the future. I had talked with the leaders of the march and then drafted a text, which Dr. Benjamin Spock read that day, in which we called upon the North Vietnamese as well as the South Vietnamese to help put an end to the war. For it was in this period that the alienation of the young intensified because of American policy in Indochina, and Vietcong flag-wavers began to appear in the ranks of the peace movement. That development was to have an important effect upon the success of the antiwar effort, making it more difficult to reach the great mass of people. It was also to play a role in the discussions within our socialist world.

Then, in 1966, the escalations became even more massive and the first open signs of disagreement appeared among our socialist cadre. Over the next four years, our internal debate was to touch upon some of the crucial political themes of the decade: the relationship between war and morality; the question of anti-Communism; the evaluation of the new social strata that formed the basis of the peace movement; the assessment of the official AFL–CIO position on Vietnam. Although we did not know it in 1966, our high hopes for America had just been shattered in Southeast Asia.

One of the first confrontations within our group took place at a community room in Penn South, the housing development put up by the Garment Workers' Union, where Bayard and a number of our people lived. On my side were Irving Howe, Manny Geltman, and Stanley Plastrik, editors of DISSENT who had been Shachtmanites in their youth but had broken with Max during the Korean War. Ironically, they had differed with him then because they thought that he too nearly equated the evils in capitalist democracy and Communist totalitarianism, refusing to see the superiority of the former over the latter. But they had remained principled critics of American society throughout the '50s—and defenders of the civil rights of Communists. Now that Shachtman was sympathetic to Johnson's policy, the DISSENT editors were hostile to it.

The meeting rapidly became tense. Shachtman launched into a Marxist attack on pacifism and the moralistic approach to politics. In Max's view, a condemnation of the Vietnam war primarily on the grounds that it was immoral was an exercise in phrasemongering. Of course, he said, the war is horrible and the killing should be stopped as soon as possible; of course, the United States is involved with dictators, scoundrels, and knaves; of course, the bombing should be stopped. But the hard question, he continued, is the political basis on which you do those things. Would it be unilateral withdrawal of American troops leading to a Communist victory? A coalition government? Concessions from the North Vietnamese as well as from the South Vietnamese?

There was, I thought—and think—substance in this line of reasoning. In the peace movement one did indeed encounter an emotional, simplistic revulsion against the war that ignored all of the difficult and complex questions it posed. Shachtman, I am sure, agreed with me that we never should have gone into Indochina in support of the French in the first place. Indeed, he had been one of the few Americans who had said that quite

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clearly when our indirect intervention began in 1946 and 1947. And he was right to charge that some idealistic antiwar activists were operating on a righteous indignation that is no substitute for politics.

Yet Shachtman was wrong. The DISSENT editors and I were not motivated by pacifist absolutism or sentimentality. We had made a political analysis of America's self-defeating policy of aligning itself with reactionary anti-Communists (more on that point in a moment). Then—and I am not sure how explicit we became about this on that particular evening, but it was basic to everything we said—there was a tendency in Shachtman's approach to reduce Marxism to a kind of pragmatism which put aside ideals. By overreacting against moralizing in the peace movement, he had come perilously close to eliminating morality from the socialist vision altogether. In that case, what distinguished Shachtman's refusal to oppose the war from that of Hubert Humphrey and other liberals who were the decent agents of calamity?

In making this error, Shachtman had had to neglect a brilliant lesson in Marxism which he had himself presented to the American public. In the '30s the *New International,* a Trotskyist journal under his editorship, had published an exchange between Leon Trotsky and John Dewey. One of the points at issue was the relationship of means and ends and the charge made against Marxism—or at least against its Leninist variant—that it taught that any means were justified by a good end. Trotsky had quite convincingly argued that means and ends cannot be separated, that the means become the end. Therefore, even if a socialist revolution that sought to make men the masters of their own destiny might have to use force, it could not possibly reach its goal by the systematic use of deceit within the working class.

Marx himself had made a similar point in his writings about British imperialism in India. He regarded British brutality on the subcontinent as the unwitting instrument of historic change in that it broke the reactionary, institutionalized torpor of Indian life—but at the same time, he condemned the British actions as barbaric and opposed them by trying to find revolutionary alternatives. Marx refused to turn morality into a shrewd adaptation to power, even when that power was accomplishing, albeit brutally, certain necessary tasks. It was Stalinism which formulated the proposition that anything done by the leaders of the proletariat, including the most savage attacks on the proletariat itself, is licit and even good. And as Trotsky—and Shachtman—had so well understood, a thousand Stalinist speeches about the nobility of proclaimed ends did not change the real ends inherent in the totalitarian means being employed.

Shachtman had rightly helped us realize that, under American circumstances in the '60s, we could only transform unconscionable arrangements of power by making contact with them. We had, thank God, left that proud isolation in which we had waited for a messianic revolutionary rising that was never to come. But that practicality had led some of our comrades, Max among them, to a pragmatism about the most important moral issue of the decade. If, I thought, we accepted his methodology, then our socialist heritage was nothing more than a sophisticated rationale for tactics that politicians, blissfully unaware of the dialectic, had been practicing for years. There was a point at which, after taking into account all of the extenuating historical circumstances, one had to say of America's role in Vietnam what Marx had said of the British role in India: *it was wrong and barbarous.*

ANOTHER SOURCE of Max Shachtman's attitude had to do with the domestic consequences of the war.

The landslide of 1964 had elected the most liberal Congress within a generation. With an activist president of New Deal inclinations, that provided the setting for the

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most hopeful period of reform since Franklin Roosevelt. The middle-class activists in the peace movement often ignored these very practical considerations within the United States just as they did not bother their heads with the political complexities of American withdrawal from Indochina. But if these socially privileged antiwarriors saw only the moral issue of Vietnam and ignored its other aspects, Shachtman and his associates turned that error upside down.

This crucial failure involved the issue of "guns or butter."

At the preparatory sessions of the White House Conference on Civil Rights in the fall of 1965, Bayard and I had worked very closely with A. Philip Randolph (Bayard's old friend and mentor). We had wanted to find a dramatic way to project our conviction that there could be no meaningful rights for black people, or any other minority, unless there was a planned, full-employment economy that would benefit the entire nation, the majority as well as the minorities. Shachtman suggested the name of a "Freedom Budget" and, with the brilliant help of Leon Keyserling, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers under Truman, a preliminary draft was prepared for Randolph. In the following months, Bayard Rustin and Leon Keyserling labored to come up with a finished document, and they won endorsements for it from a wide spectrum of trade union and civil rights leaders. Conceived as a practical guide for policy-makers, the Budget was, however, unveiled in the period of escalating war.

Could one separate the struggle for the Freedom Budget from the issue of the war? All of us agreed that we wanted hawks and doves to unite behind domestic programs. The position of George Meany and the AFL–CIO Executive Council on Vietnam was, I thought, wrong. But that did not for a moment change the fact that Meany and the Federation were the most powerful and committed forces fighting for national health insurance, full employment, tax reform, public housing, and all the rest of the social investments crucial to a Freedom Budget. It was intolerable to tell a hungry family in an urban ghetto that, before it could enjoy a decent meal, it must wait upon the success of an antiwar movement primarily composed of the well-fed.

That was a simple enough attitude. The more complex issues concerned one's assessment of the relationship between guns and butter and the tactics that followed from it. It was indeed true, as Rustin and Keyserling and others argued, that America was rich enough to afford both guns and butter. But was it *politically* possible simultaneously to give top priority to both the tragedy in Indochina and the fight for a decent America at home? I thought not, and feel that history has proved my case.

Nathan Glazer, an opponent of the war, has tried to demonstrate the opposite. He concedes that various social programs were either cut back or did not grow during the time of escalation: the Office of Economic Opportunity had expected to increase its budget from $1.5 billion to $3.5 billion in 1965 but received only $1.75 billion; the Model Cities program was never taken seriously, and so on. But, Glazer argues, it was not the war that caused these setbacks but problems inherent in the programs themselves. And, in any case, he holds that there was a rise in social spending, most notably in the billions that went into Medicare and Medicaid. Therefore, Glazer concludes, Vietnam did not wreck the Great Society. I disagree.

In the State of the Union message of January 1964, Lyndon Johnson hardly mentioned Communism or the Cold War, a fact that disconcerted some right-wingers at the time. When I went to Washington to work on the Shriver task force in February 1964, and throughout that year, the issue of poverty was glamorous. Shriver's phone rang incessantly as federal bureaucrats, laborites, religious leaders, blacks, intellectuals, and just about everyone else tried to get into the new

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act. The spirit of the capital was buoyant, hopeful, looking toward reform. By the fall of 1965 a nervous Lyndon Johnson was scanning the guest list at the White House preconference meetings on Civil Rights to see which of his guests had also endorsed Sane's demonstration against his war policies. It is certainly true, as Glazer says, that there were difficulties in the social programs that had nothing to do with the war. But he does not take into account the change in moral and emotional priorities of the Administration, brought about by the events in Indochina. That change had a profound, and negative, impact on the possibilities of reform.

Lyndon Johnson himself corroborated my analysis. The American intervention in Vietnam amounted to an undeclared, presidential war. Since the Administration was always glimpsing light at the end of the tunnel, the assumption was that one could soon get on with the domestic programs if only the antiwar hotheads would refrain from destroying the 1964 election. And Johnson did not ask for taxes to finance his military policies—which was his own tacit admission that the nation was unwilling to vote for both guns and butter.

Shachtman and his cothinkers brought those Johnsonian politics into our tight little world. They predicted the demise of Vietnam as an issue every year for six or seven years; they tried to ignore the war and to concentrate on domestic questions, on which all of us still agreed; they refused to recognize that guns and butter, though an economic possibility, were a political-psychological impossibility. The man most trapped in this argument was Bayard Rustin.

Nothing could ever diminish my affection and admiration for Bayard. However much I might disagree with him on an issue, he remains the bravest man I have ever known, and certainly one of the most dedicated and committed militants. That, indeed, was his problem. He had spent a lifetime in the pacifist movement and, on the basis of courageous principle, he had gone to prison during World War II in opposition to what I believe was a just war. So all of his past would predispose him to join with the peace activists. At the same time, his work with King, his leadership in the 1963 March on Washington, and his imaginative and tireless activity on behalf of an alliance between black and white working people had finally given him a chance to influence the struggle against poverty. If he went with the antiwar militants, his own personal career would hardly suffer. He had, after all, been a functionary in pacifist organizations for years. But the hopes and possibilities he foresaw for black Americans, and others among the poor and deprived, would be ended.

I think Bayard made the wrong decision: he subordinated his antiwar convictions to what he became convinced were the imperatives of domestic coalition politics. He was wrong because this position presumed that the social programs could succeed while the war raged; wrong because it meant ignoring one agony in order to deal with another. Wrong yet understandable. It was love of justice in America which led Bayard to ignore monstrous injustice in Indochina. Martin King made the other, the right, decision. With the knowledge that he was imperiling, if not destroying, access to the White House, King became an outspoken critic of the war. But to say that Bayard was wrong in his choice is hardly to condemn him. T. S. Eliot once said that the greatest treason "was to do the right thing for the wrong reason." How, then, does one judge a man like Bayard, who did the wrong thing for the right reason?

III

One day in the mid-'60s, Max Shachtman, Irving Howe, Tom Kahn, and I were chatting at the LID office. I don't remember how Shachtman got on the subject, but he began to talk about the Trotskyist attitude toward Communism in the '30s. It was, he said, at the very center of our thinking. We were

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really more passionately concerned about a switch in political line in Russia than about the great battles taking place in our own country. For us, he went on, "the Russian question" was decisive, and that obsession sometimes warped our judgment.

It was a remarkably candid admission. But even then, it understated the problem somewhat by focusing exclusively on the '30s. In the last years of that decade—and of Trotsky's life—Shachtman had come into conflict with his mentor. In those years, Shachtman had developed the Marxist theory that Communism—Stalinism, we would have said—represented a new form of class society in which a bureaucratic class owns the state, which owns the means of production. Those of us who held Shachtman's position therefore regarded Communist movements as incipient totalitarian ruling classes. That their militants were often committed and brave only compounded the tragedy. The peasants who soldiered in the great capitalist revolutions of the 17th to the 19th centuries had, after all, died valiantly to bring their bourgeois enemies to power. That decent Communists would unwittingly serve an oppressor of the working class was a similarly cruel irony.

All of us shared this analysis; as far as I know, we still do. We had opposed French colonialism in Indochina after World War II, even though we were perfectly aware that the national liberation movement had been taken over by the Communists. We were particularly conscious of that fact because there had been a thriving, mass Trotskyist movement in that country in the '30s, and it had bested the Stalinists in open political competition on several occasions. That was one of the reasons why Ho Chi Minh murdered the Trotskyist revolutionaries as soon as he had the opportunity. Our knowledge of that grim history made it impossible for us to believe that Ho was simply a gentle, lovable "uncle." We realized that he was both a genuine, and very effective, leader of masses—and a product of Stalinism.

None of us had any illusions about the kind of government a Vietcong victory might bring. We knew that Ho and his comrades had killed thousands of peasants during forced collectivization in North Vietnam during the '50s (a fact they themselves had confessed), and we thought the historic enmity of the Indochinese for the Chinese made it possible that there would be "Titoist" characteristics in any Communist regime in Indochina; we expected that a bureaucratic collectivist state would result in the South if the Communists prevailed. We were hardly indifferent to that prospect. It meant that the people would be expertly and efficiently exploited so as to produce a surplus for modernization. That might provide a basis for the industrialization of the country under the leadership of a new, totalitarian class. It was most certainly not socialism.

Yet we opposed the French until their expulsion in 1954 and the American policy of support to the Diem regime after that. Why? It was Shachtman, strange to say, who persuaded me on this point. There was, he rightly argued, a symbiotic relationship between Stalinism in the Third World and the reactionary, militarist regimes it usually fought. The reactionaries, particularly if they had massive aid, recruited people for the Communist banner by making Communism seem the legitimate expression of a mass desire for national freedom and social justice. Therefore it was utterly self-defeating, among other things, to support an Emperor Bao Dai or a Diem as a lesser evil to the Communists, since the Bao Dais, Diems, and the corrupt ruling classes they led were a prime source of Communist strength.

Moreover—and on this point we followed an old socialist tradition—we believed that foreign oppression would only postpone the day of reckoning between the indigenous Left and Right. When, for example, we had supported the Algerian nationalists against the French, we were quite critical of the National Liberation Front and understood that it was an unstable coalition of bourgeois

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politicians, Communists, Trotskyists, local chiefs, etc. But even though we suspected that the French dictatorship would be succeeded by an Algerian dictatorship, we felt that the issue of freedom could only be posed once an independent Algeria had been created. (It is fascinating to note that the AFL–CIO and Jay Lovestone shared our point of view on this question.)

Our anti-Communism did not, as some revisionist historians have argued, relentlessly push us into support of the reactionaries that were backed by the United States. However, sometime in the mid-'60s, Shachtman changed his mind. How then could a man who had resolutely fought American intervention in Indochina under both Eisenhower and Kennedy now come to a position of critical support of Johnson's qualitatively greater escalation? Max had opposed his country's policies when that put him in conflict with the established liberal wisdom about collective security. Now he critically supported the same policies, which put him at odds with a growing liberal consensus based somewhat on his own previous arguments. Why?

In posing this question, I do not suggest that Max had decided that the war had been right in the first place, or that he had any sympathy for the military government in Saigon. He yearned for a democratic—and anti-Communist—alternative to the dictators America relied upon. But in the last analysis he had decided that he would, reluctantly perhaps, back American power in that country because it provided a shield behind which a democratic revolution might organize itself. So it was that Shachtman and his followers always saw much more of a democratic opposition in Vietnam than anyone else; so it was that they increasingly alienated themselves from the American peace movement until they stood outside it, as bitter critics.

THE KEY to that transition, I suspect, might have been a kind of despair. When Shachtman broke with Trotsky in 1939, he still held to the basic Trotskyist premise that there was a mass alternative to both Stalinism and capitalism. For a while it was possible to think that Third World neutralism might play that role, and the Hungarian and Polish Octobers of 1956 were both under the aegis of revolutionaries who wanted to push forward from Stalinism to socialism, not backward to capitalism. Still, there was not—there is not—a single power that incarnates the socialist ideal and it is, to say the least, difficult for a man to dedicate himself to a possibility that will probably not be realized in this century, if ever.

But if socialism had become problematic and Stalinism was on the march in Indochina, who then would effectively fight for democracy? An exchange between Schachtman and Leo Trotsky during their dispute in the late '30s should illuminate this question. Trotsky had refused to accept Max's thesis that the Soviet bureaucracy represented a new class. But, Promethean that he was, he also refused to dismiss that possibility. He wrote,

> . . . if the world proletariat should actually prove incapable of fulfulling the mission placed upon it by the course of development, nothing else would remain except only to recognize that the socialist program, based on the internal contradictions of capitalist society, ended as a utopia. It is self-evident that a new "minimum" program would be required—for the defense of the interests of the slaves of the totalitarian bureaucratic society. [From *In Defense of Marxism.*]

It was typical of the implacable revolutionary that, even though Trotsky could imagine the failure of socialism, he could not for a moment think of giving up the struggle for the oppressed.

I wonder if something like Trotsky's logic was at work with Shachtman in the '60s. A tough-minded thinker who had only contempt for socialist sentimentality, he would never have consoled himself with the old slogans if he thought them outworn. Perhaps

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Vietnam forced him to come to a conclusion he hated: that his previous hope for a "third camp" independent of both capitalism and Communism was an illusion. If that indeed was the case, then he might have reluctantly decided—even if without the hope of socialism—that he must brave the opposition of some of his former associates and the scorn of the liberal establishment and critically back America as a lesser evil in Vietnam.

And indeed, if one were asked to choose in the abstract between the reactionary policies of bourgeois democratic America and those of totalitarian Communism, the former is infinitely preferable—i.e., much less destructive of freedom and human dignity. Even in Spain and Greece, even in South Vietnam, there is more of a possibility that the underground opposition will survive as an organized force than in Russia, China, or North Vietnam. French imperialism never knew how to kill the Trotskyist revolutionaries in Indochina; Ho Chi Minh did. Our despots tend to be corrupt and inefficient; their despots, honest and murderously effective.

In posing the choice in that way, Shachtman seemed to forget one of his own most profound insights: abstract comparison between bourgeois democracy and totalitarian Communism cannot be transposed into a Vietnamese context precisely because American power in such a situation is not an alternative, but an incitement, to Communism. The United States made memorable contributions to the victory of Mao by supporting Chiang, to Castro by backing Batista, and to the creation of a bureaucratic collectivist state in North Vietnam by aiding French colonialism and Bao Dai. And it could stave off the consequences of its own politics in South Vietnam only by "saving" the people there through a cruel, indecisive war that murdered them by the tens of thousands and rendered them homeless by the millions.

The possible triumph of Communism in Vietnam, I said to Shachtman and his friends, was therefore a lesser evil to a war which certainly could have no progressive result. That hardly meant that I rejoiced at the possibility of a Communist state in the South. I denounced that outcome in the peace movement at every turn, and it was not always a popular thing to say to the more fervid of the simplifiers. But in Hungary in 1956, where there *was* a working-class socialist revolution, we had not advocated armed American intervention against the Soviet imperialist attack, since that would probably have led to World War III, a calamity much greater than totalitarian dictatorship. Moreover, I felt—as I had learned so well from Shachtman in the Joe McCarthy days, when it was the liberal wisdom to regard Communism as seamlessly monolithic—that life would go on in Indochina even after a Communist victory and that the class character of Communism would eventually provoke a new resistance there.

Communism played a critical role in our dispute. The estimate of the peace movement and the new social strata upon which it was based did too.

IV

The antiwar activists of the '60s were overwhelmingly white and middle-class. Many of them were unconcerned about the domestic political consequences of their actions and even contemptuous of that majority of Americans who supported the war. There was thus a profoundly elitist tendency in the movement, and Shachtman and his friends were able to denounce it as dilettantish and collegiate. Moreover, there was a vocal, and regularly televised, fringe of exhibitionists and Vietcong flag-wavers who could plausibly be dismissed as freakish, sinister, or both.

But in their derisive comparison of this movement with the trade unionists, my comrades failed to notice two of its historic aspects. First, the antiwar young were right: Vietnam was not only an immoral conflict,

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it was counterproductive from all points of view, including that of progressive anti-Communism. And second, the new strata of issue-oriented and college-educated young people who provided the mass base for this movement were, and are, extremely important to the creation of a new majority for social change in this country. They often do not have the stability, the stubborn commitment to action of the trade unionsists, which is born out of the struggle for daily bread. But then no other class (with the exception of the most class-conscious group in America, the very rich) has that kind of cohesion.

If one wants an illuminating analogy to understand the young people who became involved in the peace movement in the '60s, Marx's concept of the petty-bourgeois helps. That stratum was based upon small property, and therefore feared the bourgeoisie, which threatened to crush its small-scale competitors, as well as the working class, which talked of the abolition of private property altogether. Therefore in Marx's analysis—and there is much history to corroborate it—the petty bourgeoisie vacillated, turning now toward the party of order, and even toward fascism, and then toward the party of change, and even toward socialism. Because of this equivocating, "petty bourgeois" was put down in the radical lexicon as one of the most vicious epithets one could hurl at a socialist opponent. As a result, not a few radicals forgot a rather crucial point: that Marxists were always determined to win the petty bourgeoisie to the cause of the revolution.

All that is, in a sense, ancient history. The class of small property owners has not played a very important role in corporate and oligopolistic capitalism for some time now (although it certainly made a contribution to Hitler's trumph in 1933). Moreover, the young people attracted to the peace movement were hardly shopkeepers, present or future, though they were an intermediate and ambiguous stratum. Their parents' background, which was middle-class, and their economic future as professionals or technicians often disposed them to look down on working people; their membership in the first generation trained by mass higher education, their participation in what Galbraith dubbed "the educational-scientific estate" often inclined them to be programmatic in politics and open to the proposals for planned social investments that come from the Left. Since their organizations were not built upon the imperious necessities of making a living, they were episodic, subject to great fits of enthusiasm and depression. Their most characteristic form of expression was the mass demonstration, combining a crusade and a picnic; yet the education they had received made them particularly adept at registering voters, canvasing, and other traditional political arts.

I could go on and on, describing the internal contradictions of that peace movement, but my ambivalent response should now be clear enough. The antiwarriors had a tremendous potential for good, some powerful tendencies toward self-righteousness, and periodically collapsed into inaction. Shachtman and his associates saw only the negatives in all of this. I was determined to build upon the positive.

In fact, I underestimated the strength of these new forces. In my book *Toward a Democratic Left,* completed in the fall of 1967, I described a "new class" in the knowledge economy. But I was as certain as any poll that Lyndon Johnson was secure in his incumbency. So when I heard Joe Rauh present the case for an independent candidacy at a Negotiations Now meeting in Washington, I was not really persuaded. Curt Gans called me some time after that and told me that he and Al Lowenstein were looking for a candidate for the Dump Johnson movement. Convinced that Johnson and his policy had to be challenged in the primaries, I was sure that the effort would fail. When Eugene McCarthy announced for the presidency, I supported him in an article in

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Commentary and with some speeches. But I was not at all hopeful of success and quite critical of the middle-class character of the campaign. So when Robert Kennedy declared his candidacy right after the New Hampshire primary, I decided to support him. Much more than McCarthy, he could speak to the blacks and the working people; he might be able to build a mass coalition. Yet even then, I did not think he could win. Now I think otherwise. He was, as I look back on the '60s, the man who might have changed the course of American history.

I met Robert Kennedy only once, but the moment was poignant. I had scheduled a lecture at Butler University in Indianapolis long before the Indiana primary became the first battle ground for Kennedy and McCarthy. Before I left on that date, I had called Arthur Schlesinger to tell him that I wanted to work for Kennedy, and at a press conference before my speech I had stated my preference for Kennedy on local television. That night, after I had finished at Butler, I went to a restaurant to meet Dick Goodwin, whom I had known since the anti-poverty task force of 1964. Kennedy was with him; so was the astronaut John Glenn.

"Mike gave you a good endorsement today, Senator," Goodwin said by way of introduction. Kennedy thanked me and then Goodwin added, "He said he couldn't back Rockefeller because he won't spend $150 billion on the cities." "My God," Kennedy replied with a smile, "you didn't say that I would, did you?" Goodwin then suggested that we had a perfect team and that Kennedy could go around the state with Glenn, one of his more conservative supporters, on one side and me on the other. Then we talked seriously, primarily about why so many New York reformers hated Kennedy, a phenomenon that troubled and puzzled him. He told me with a sort of hurt disbelief how a peace activist in San Francisco had spit in his face and called him a fascist.

We talked for an hour or so and started walking down a chilly and empty street toward Kennedy's hotel at about 12:30 at night. Kennedy asked me if I would come to California to campaign for him. I agreed. Suddenly an aging black man ran up and said, "You're Robert Kennedy, aren't you? My wife's sitting back in the car and she wants to meet you." Kennedy pulled his lapels against his face to ward off the cold, and trotted down the deserted avenue to shake one more hand for the day.

In California, I reported to Frank Mankiewicz at the Ambassador Hotel and was immediately dispatched for several days of duty at cocktail parties and colleges around the state. The contradictions of the peace movement were painfully obvious to me as I shuttled from Los Angeles to San Francisco and back. I defended Kennedy against the charge of being too conservative at a luxurious Beverly Hills home. At Berkeley, where I spoke from the steps of Sproul Hall, there were young radicals in the crowd—perhaps the one who had spit in Kennedy's face was among them—and they catcalled as if I were speaking on behalf of a candidate of the Far Right. They could not abide the prospect of a successful, mainstream movement that would win real workers and blacks to the cause of peace and social change. That was not written in their sectarian scenarios.

But there were other, more hopeful moments in that brief California swing. At the Los Angeles campus of California State I spoke at a rally with Cesar Chavez, that luminous apostle of nonviolence among the migrant workers, and John Lewis, one of the first leaders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

Even though it was becoming clear that we were reaching out to the working people —that the Chicanos knew Kennedy as the one senator who had supported their union in its most difficult hours and had come to break bread with Cesar Chavez when he ended a fast—I still thought we were going to lose. Kennedy, it seemed to me, would rally the most effective opposition to the

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war; he could not, I felt, win the presidency. The day of his funeral, I understood that I had been wrong.

No one who traveled on the funeral train from New York to Washington will ever forget the emotion of that day. As we emerged from the tunnel on the New Jersey side of the river, we saw the first of that seemingly endless line of people who were to stand alongside the track in grieving respect. There were isolated figures; sometimes a veteran standing at salute; knots of nuns and schoolchildren; and everywhere, the black and the poor. I could not look out the window very often, because every time I did, I began to cry. The sorrowing faces along the way were a mirror in which I saw my own feelings. At Baltimore, the station was packed and as we moved slowly toward it along an embankment, you could look down the streets of the ghetto and see the people standing and staring.

Inside the train, it was like many Irish wakes I have known. The genius of that macabre institution is to ritualize social relationships so as to distract the living from the intolerable fact of death. Some people drank; others chatted about politics. Ethel Kennedy and Edward Kennedy walked the length of that train and shook hands with every person on it. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Adam Yarmolinsky, Frank Mankiewicz, and I were talking—all of us had been together on the Shriver antipoverty task force—and Pat said that, by God, all we really do well is to bury our dead. And then Pat said, look at this train, there is a government riding on it. And indeed, among the politicians, old and new, the intellectuals and the trade unionists, the blacks and the Chicanos, there was the administration of Robert Kennedy that was never going to be.

As the brother of the slain President, Robert Kennedy had touched millions; as the one white politician of stature who could communicate his passionate concern for blacks and Chicanos and the minorities, he had built up a new constituency; as the man who wished to stop the Vietnam war, he would have won the McCarthy activists to his banner in a general election campaign. He could reach out to Polish American workers in Gary—and to the blacks whom they feared.

V

Robert Kennedy might have united the quarreling factions of the Democratic party behind his candidacy in 1968. But with his death, the potential Democratic coalition disintegrated and as a result Richard Nixon was twice elected president of the United States. During and after these events we socialists debated a critical question: what social forces are there that can be brought together in a majority coalition which will offer a progressive alternative to the likes of Nixon? At the center of our discussion was the issue of the American working class.

For years, most intellectuals and scholars in this country were wrong about the working class, and we—those in our socialist cadre who opposed the war as well as those who did not—were right. I put the matter with such arrogance because it is important to understand how Max Shachtman and his friends concluded that educated and affluent thinkers are so blinded by class prejudice that they cannot be trusted on any issue, including Vietnam. The "end of ideology" theorists of the late '50s and early '60s had argued that the Gross National Product had become so large, it was no longer necessary for antagonistic classes to struggle over its distribution. Now, they said, all groups could advance together. That, in a popular form, became the philosophy of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society; and Henry Ford and Walter Reuther, Martin Luther King, Jr., and moderate Dixiecrats were supposed to cooperate for the greater glory and prosperity of all. The class struggle was over.

Ironically, some conservative Republicans were taken in by this talk (which reinforced their deepest misconceptions) and they insisted in the Landrum-Griffin law of 1959

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that the rank and file be given the legal right to overrule their union leaders. In that way, these antiunionists thought, the inherent conservatism of the average worker would act as a check upon the radical tendencies of the labor bureaucrat. The ranks immediately proceeded to use these new rights to reject the contracts their leaders had negotiated for them and to demand more money and better working conditions. Then, in the mid-'60s, there was another reason for militance from below in the unions. The Vietnam-induced inflation wiped out wage gains and labor had to engage in bitter struggles just to maintain a living standard it thought was already won.

So people began to notice the existence, not simply of workers, but of a social class with institutions and attitudes of its own. At the same time, the New Left was reaching the high point of its influence on campus and turning from a nonideological radicalism to a vulgar Marxism mixed with more than a little of middle-class petulance. In the process, many sons and daughters of the upper middle class began to argue for alliance of workers and students. There was much fantasy in this since the working class to which the New Leftists referred—they saw it as far to the Left of the union leadership, incipiently radical, proletarians according to the rubric of the *Communist Manifesto*—did not exist. Even so, their fascination with the subject was one more factor making the society conscious that some kind of working class did exist.

Within our socialist cadre, our conceptions of the working class derived not from the events and intellectual fads of the '60s but from a more general, and solidly based, Marxian perspective. In the era of the '50s, with its American celebration, we had rightly insisted that the typical worker, though not poor, was systematically deprived of enough income for a decent life. Moreover, we said that working in a factory, or behind the wheel of a truck, was a qualitatively different experience from life in the executive suite or even at the bank teller's window. Therefore there were class institutions, the trade unions, and class political organizations like COPE and the other organizations for mobilizing the labor vote.

In the '50s, we developed this essentially accurate—and at that time, lonely—analysis of the working class somewhat romantically. We thought that the ranks of the labor movement were going to be radicalized. Then in the course of our evolution during the late '50s and the '60s, we had developed ties with a broad range of unionists, with Meanyites as well as Reutherites. It was a point of pride with us that we did not look to the working class as it should be, i.e., as we wanted it to be, but as it actually was. In doing so, we risked our socialist souls, as I have already pointed out; but then taking risks is a normal hazard for any serious leftist.

So it was that when Hubert Humphrey emerged as the only real alternative to Richard Nixon in 1968, all of us backed him. Some did so with enthusiasm because they essentially shared Meany's support of the Johnson administration, including its Vietnam policy. Others, like myself, did so because we understood that Humphrey, despite all his associations with American policy in Southeast Asia, was infinitely preferable to Richard Nixon. In this, what separated me and my socialist cothinkers from the McCarthy activists was precisely our class analysis of American politics. For them, Humphrey's labor support was a mark against him. For us, it was a major factor in his favor. It meant that his commitment to full employment, his racial policies, his Supreme Court nominations would be infinitely better than Nixon's and that his foreign policy would not be worse.

Since I thought that both labor and the peace movement were essential to a progressive coalition, I spoke out for Humphrey during the campaign. It was not a particularly fashionable thing to do among the affluent Left. One night I spoke at a rally at the Palace Theatre for Paul O'Dwyer, the

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McCarthy partisan who had won the Democratic nomination for senator. O'Dwyer had not yet made his endorsement of Humphrey and there was quite a bit of baiting of the Vice President. When I said that everyone should vote for Humphrey I was not booed, but there was a shock of disbelief in the audience. At another rally, at Manhattan Center, veterans of the McCarthy and Kennedy campaigns did speak out for Humphrey —Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and John Kenneth Galbraith among them. While Galbraith was at the podium, two "crazies" came down the aisle, stark naked, and presented him with a pig's head on a platter.

This was an extreme case of a malaise to be found among a fair number in the new peace constituency: the idea that "doing one's own thing" was somehow truly radical. Politics was the decor of their personal drama, and if they were genuinely horrified by the war in Vietnam, their own psyches still came first. Waving a Vietcong flag at a demonstration or disrupting a peace rally —they never tried out their theatrics on less tolerant groups, such as the American Legion, only on the permissive Left—would certainly provoke their parents, and that was the essential liberation. That the very same actions might harden their fellow citizens in support of the war was of secondary importance.

Max Shachtman could, and did, point to such incidents as proof of the rightness of his contemptuous dismissal of the entire McCarthy movement. In fact, the crazies, like the ultra-Lefts in SDS, had been sullen and disappointed when peace became a serious issue through the McCarthy and Kennedy candidacies.

While the McCarthy forces were acting ambiguously during the 1968 campaign, the unions were behaving with an exemplary commitment. Though all of the polls told them that Humphrey did not have a chance, they mobilized the workers and challenged the Wallacites in the shops by arguing that a worker's class interest in Humphrey, i.e., in his job, was more important than any alleged racial interest in Wallace. The result was a remarkable corroboration of the theory that there is a politically conscious working class in America. For it was labor, and labor almost alone, which very nearly made Hubert Humphrey president in 1968.

Yet it was not as simple as Max—and I —had thought. Humphrey received 42 percent of the vote and Nixon 43 percent—but Wallace took over 13 percent, i.e., twice the proportion of Eugene Debs's best year, and four times Norman Thomas's finest showing. We wrongly said to ourselves that we had almost won when in fact the right-of-center vote (Nixon plus Wallace) was about 57 percent as against Humphrey's 42 percent. In other words, the 1972 landslide for Nixon meant that the conservative vote had increased by only 4 percent as compared to 1968. I do not think that Max and his friends understood this complexity. On the basis of 1968 they assumed that labor was a near-majority in the United States and they could therefore afford to indulge their opposition to the "New Politics" constituency of McCarthy, Kennedy, and McGovern. In fact, 1968 proved that labor cannot win alone, 1972 showed that the New Politics cannot win alone—while 1976 might prove that together they can carry the nation.

IN ALL of this, Shachtman and his cothinkers could plausibly claim that they were being utterly Marxist in lining up more and more uncritically with George Meany. After all they were proving their loyalty to the working class as it existed (they identified the working class with the AFL–CIO and the AFL–CIO with Meany).

Meany, I thought, had made enormous strides in his social thinking and played a progressive role within the unions. He had come from the relatively conservative milieu of the New York Building Trades, had been a central figure in making the AFL–CIO more political, more concerned with planned social investments. That was, and is, no

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small accomplishment. But there were other tendencies in the movement, too, Walter Reuther being the most obvious case in point. In the summer of 1972, I went to a Labor for Peace meeting in St. Louis. It was held at a Teamster auditorium and there were leaders from the Auto Workers, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, from the State, County and Municipal Employees, the American Federation of Teachers, the Butcher Workmen, the West Coast Longshoremen, and other major unions.

Shachtman and his friends did not see these things. Instead, they invented a new radical sin: they had become right-wing sectarians. They employed a Bolshevik style and a purist Marxism in order to side with the forces of the Center and to the Right of the labor movement and to ignore the appearance of a new mass constituency with leftist inclinations. The sad climax of all this came at the meeting of the National Committee of the Socialist party in the fall of 1972. A lukewarm statement of preference for George McGovern against Richard Nixon was finally adopted, but not before the leading members of the majority—and particularly those whom Shachtman influenced—had made it clear that they would welcome, or accept with cheerful equanimity, a Nixon landslide.

Did this mean, to use American radicalism's most favored curse, that Max and his followers had "sold out"? Not at all. They were moved, I am convinced, by sincere considerations. They had, after all, maintained extremely unpopular ideas in the face of government harassment. They could not be bought for money—only for love. Yet they did pay a price for their commitment. For a series of involved reasons the labor movement normally tends to be rather monolithic. As Gus Tyler put it quite succintly in his *Labor Revolution,*

> . . . unions, by their very nature, are easily affected by the virus of bureaucratic rule. Unions tend to be monosocial (like a parish church); to be combative (like an army); to be administrative (like a governmental agency); to be market-oriented (like a business). Taken together, these traits form a strong natural bent in established unions toward the "one-party" system.

The ideal way for socialists to relate to such a reality—in the 1950s, Max and the rest of us would have said, the only way—is as elected representatives of the rank and file. Then there is no necessity of currying favor with the leadership, of adapting programs, of speaking carefully and even deviously. That, however, is a difficult perspective, and it is possible for a man or woman to maintain integrity and independence while serving as a staff member of a union. But when an individual, or a group, takes on the role of being ideologists and political spokesmen for a labor leadership, then they must submerge their differences, at least in public, and follow the official line at every point.

And that can be more corrupting, for it involves a self-censorship. So it was, for instance, that *New America,* the Socialist party newspaper edited, since 1968, by one of Max's closest associates, hardly reacted to the epochal struggle of the miners for internal union democracy and reacted to the brutal slaying of the rebel leader Jock Yablonski primarily by worrying that this tragedy might be used by the foes of labor. Joe Rauh, one of the most decent men in American politics and the lawyer to the insurgent miners, was heartsick about that article in *New America.* As well he might have been.

The corruption was political and ideological. Socialism was reduced to the immediate demands of the American labor movement; morality became a sophisticated adaptation to tactical necessity, the socialist function of prophecy. All this was done—and I am serious about my paradox, shocking as it is—with the best socialist will in the world.

Yet, however honorable the motivation, the results were deplorable. Shachtman had begun with Lenin and Trotsky; he and his followers ended up with Jay Lovestone.

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Lovestone was a major leader of American Communism who, as Bukharin's factional ally in this country, helped expel the Trotskyists and was then himself expelled by the Stalinists. In the '30s he led a Bukharinite sect which contained some remarkably talented people and which, in a move unprecedented in American radical history, decided at the end of the '30s that it had no future and dissolved. After his break with Marxism, Lovestone became an associate and adviser of David Dubinsky and then of George Meany. A fanatical anti-Communist —he opposed Nixon's rapprochement with Peking—he played a conspiratorial role, in association with American intelligence, in the world labor movement. In the process, after World War II, he placed his own people in key organizational jobs in the union and the government.

By 1972, the Shachtman group had become remarkably Lovestonite. It, too, had reduced almost all of politics to the single theme of anti-Communism (and the related theme of anti-New Leftism); it, too, had become something of an employment agency; it, too, had turned into an adjunct of the labor establishment. These are bitter things to say but, to insist on yet another paradox, they are uttered in sadness, not in anger, with affectionate memory of the not-so-distant past.

In October 1972, I resigned my co-chairmanship of the Socialist party. It was an unhappy moment for me personally since it meant breaking with comrades with whom I had worked for 20 years. I simply found it impossible to pretend any solidarity with people who, in the name of "Marxism," were helping Richard Nixon. My act was also a small symbolic expression of a larger conflict, the one that pitted a section of the labor movement against the McGovern activists and their union allies (of whom, fortunately, there were a good number) in the 1972 election. Shortly after I resigned, Max Shachtman, to whom I am so profoundly indebted despite our differences, died.

What conclusion does one draw from this sad history? Many radicals would, I am sure, say that it all goes to prove that when a socialist mixes in capitalist politics, he is selling out and has taken the first step down a slippery slope that leads to conservatism. This is nonsense. The vocation of a radical in America in the last portion of the 20th century is to walk a perilous tightrope. He must be true to the socialist vision of a new society and constantly develop and extend its content; and he must bring that vision into contact with the actual movement fighting, not to transform the system, but to gain some little increment of dignity or even bread.

If the radical becomes totally obsessed with the vision, he will fall off that tightrope into a righteous irrelevance; if he adapts too well to the movement he hopes to inspire, he will fall into a pragmatic irrelevance. His task is to balance vision and practicality. It is a precarious life and, alas, I think that some of my good comrades have fallen off that tightrope. □

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Nicolaus Mills

The Whip and the Bee: Diary from the Grape Strike

When we are really honest with ourselves, we must admit that our lives are all that really belong to us.

To try to change conditions without power is like trying to move a car without gasoline. —*Cesar Chavez*

Los Angeles, 1967

I pronounce it like FDR's middle name, and the man at the Greyhound ticket window stares at me. "The bus don't stop at no place like that!"

"You sure?" He nods, and then I spell it out, "D-E-L-A-N-O!"

"De-*lay*-no. That's different. Sure, we got a 6:30 bus goin' there."

I buy a one-way ticket and start looking for a place to sit. It is close to midnight, but the bus station is still crowded. There is no room on the wooden benches for stretching out, so I prop my feet on my duffle bag and hunch down in a corner. I am half asleep when two cops come by and ask to see my ticket. They barely look at it once I take it out. They are checking to make sure no one is using the bus station as a flop house, and they go up and down the rows of benches like armed railroad conductors, prodding those who are sleeping with their billy clubs. Only rarely do they touch anyone with their hands. It's as if they were worried about infection. The police who ask for my identification when the bus stops at Bakersfield are the same way. I am asked to show my driver's license, but the minute it is out of my wallet, they nod and move on to the man across the aisle from me. We are the only two on the Greyhound they bother with, and they address us both in Spanish.

The Pink House

THE BUS TRIP to Delano is made up of sprints down freeways, then sudden turnoffs for small towns, and more freeway driving. The foothills along the way are one gray-brown mound after another. Their monotony is broken only by an occasional orange or lemon grove, and I sleep most of the time. I am tired when we reach Delano, but all I want to do is walk. A man outside the bus station gives me directions for the Farm Worker offices, and I start out for them. His directions, I soon realize, are almost unnecessary. Delano is as racially divided as any Southern city, and after a few blocks it becomes clear which part of town is for Anglos and which part for everyone else. I head west, past a cluster of stores and cafés and across the overpass that lets Route 99 cut through the center of town. I am surprised by the heat. It is not just that the sun is hot but that everything around me is. It feels as if there were radiators hidden in the trees and telephone poles. I am 20 minutes outside of town when a car pulls up. I wave it on. My instincts, this first morning in Delano, are to refuse a ride from anyone white. The driver ignores my wave and asks, "You going to the Union offices?" I laugh and get in. He is, it turns out, Jim Drake, Cesar's administrative assistant. He drives me to the Union's main office, a stucco

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bungalow with pink paint coming off all four sides. The dirt road in front of the Pink House is lined with beat-up cars, and a half-dozen people are sitting under a nearby tree. I am introduced to the people under the tree, most of whom have also just come to Delano, and then taken to Filipino Hall for breakfast. It is three days before I am assigned to work with the organizers who are laying the groundwork for a strike against the Giumarra Company, the principal grape grower in the area. I have been fearful of getting an office or a research assignment, and now the worst seems over. There is a shortage of sleeping spaces in the houses the Union rents and so, with two others, I move into the back room of *El Malcriado,* the Farm Worker newspaper.

Card Checks

THE ORGANIZERS' MEETINGS begin at 11:00 in the morning. They start this late because most organizing is done in the evening after the workers come home from the fields, and Bakersfield, where the majority of Giumarra workers live, is an hour from Delano. 10:30 is usually the earliest an organizer can get back home. The only exception is Friday night, when organizing is cut short so that everyone can be at the Union's general meeting. Friday is also special because it is the day on which the Union's $5-a-week salary is paid. After the general meeting, most of the organizers end up drinking beer at People's Café, where prices are cheap and nearly all the customers are farm workers.

The organizers' meetings are run by Fred Ross, a tall, gaunt man, somewhere in his middle fifties. It is Ross, who, while he was working for Saul Alinsky's Community Services Organization, started Cesar organizing, and the two have been close ever since. Ross introduces me and another new organizer to the group, but that is it as far as our newness goes. We are assigned to work with older organizers, but there is no theorizing, no special explanation for our benefit. It is assumed we will learn what needs to be done by having to do it ourselves.

The first organizers' meeting I attend begins with Ross asking for newly signed union cards. He is like a schoolteacher who has consciously decided to put his students in competition with each other. For those who have brought in only a few cards, there is very close questioning, sometimes sarcasm. For those who have brought in a good many cards, there is praise and usually a much greater willingness to hear out their stories. Most of the teams of organizers have brought in between 5 and 8 cards; the exception is a pair who have brought in 19. The cards represent commitments by the workers at Giumarra to have the United Farm Workers as their union, and they put the Union in a position to call for a card-check election and know that it has the support to win. Still, this is not the main value of the cards. For it is clear that the Giumarras, who insist that their workers don't want a union, will never voluntarily agree to an election. What the cards do is prepare the way for a strike at Giumarra. They give the workers a chance to express their feelings and the Union a chance to make plans: to know the names and addresses of workers, to begin calculating who is or isn't likely to leave the fields when that time comes.

After the card check Ross asks, "Any more new crews?"

"Two more back in the mountains," one of the organizers answers.

There is a groan, and then a decision on who should make the first contact. This will happen at least three more times in the next weeks. Crews we never knew existed will be reported working in some remote part of the Giumarra vineyards. It is this kind of isolation that has made it difficult for the men to know their own strength or numbers, and when I drive to Bakersfield the next night to meet with a family that has not yet signed with the Union, I am immediately confronted with this situation. We meet with a father and his two sons, and most of our time is spent answering questions they put to us about the Union. It isn't that they don't hate

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the Giumarras but that they don't know how many other workers are willing to sign union cards and that they fear being blacklisted. They are also new enough to be afraid of their crew leader, and so even when no one from the company is around, they keep to themselves during the day.

House Meetings

BY THE END OF JUNE, I have gotten used to the pattern of organizing. Meetings at 11:00, late afternoon dinner at Filipino Hall, into Bakersfield by 5:30. There are still only about 20 of us doing full-time organizing, but it is going much faster now. We are no longer finding new crews, and more and more help is being given us by the workers themselves. They are bringing in as many cards as we are. We feel sure we already have the signatures of at least 80 percent of the workers eligible to vote in a union election. We are weak only among the Anglo workers. They are suspicious of a union in which the leadership is Mexican American and Filipino, aware that at the very least they can no longer expect to monopolize the higher-paying jobs, such as trucker and irrigator. Many of these men are from families that came to California during the Depression years, and they leave me with a vision of John Steinbeck's Joads accepting everything they once fought against.

With one other organizer, I share responsibility for five different crews. In three of them, we meet with the crew leader himself. In the other two, we concentrate on a group of men who rent the same house. We are in contact with each crew at least several times a week, sometimes to get new names, other times just to talk about how the grapes are ripening. From our point of view the ideal time for a strike is when the seedless Thompsons, the Giumarra's biggest cash crop, are ready for picking.

Early in July Fred Ross makes a decision to hold a house meeting for the crew leaders we absolutely trust. It is a crucial step. So far, the workers have committed themselves only to wanting union representation. They have said nothing about a strike, and our problem is to see how many are willing to leave the fields when it comes to a showdown with the Giumarras. The meeting takes place early in the evening at a farm house just outside Bakersfield. Some of the men arrive in their own cars, others in the trucks they use to take their workers into the fields. We have to introduce at least half the crew leaders to each other, although many of them have been working at Giumarra for more than a dozen years. There is much joking about the need for introductions. They set the tone for the meeting: the men don't feel anonymous.

When Cesar speaks, it is not to rouse the men but to ask questions. "Do you want a strike? Will your crews stay out? Who else is to be trusted?" These are questions all of us have been asking, but now it is possible to compare replies and have the men judge one another's accuracy. Most of the crew leaders have never seen Cesar before, and he moves among them slowly, listening, asking questions, nodding in sympathy. Although there is nothing striking in anything he does or says, he sets off reactions we have not gotten in the last month. At the end of the evening Fred Ross asks the crew leaders if they are willing to help us arrange house meetings with their men. They say they are, and the stage is set for the most crucial part of the organizing.

El Mosquito

WE TRY to hold the house meetings early enough in the evening so that we can remain outside and not have to turn on lights and be bothered with bugs. Occassionally we bring beer or soft drinks but usually not very much. We worry that if the meetings seem like a party, people will think the Union is trying to trick them. The questions we get asked are nearly always the same. No one believes the company will allow a union without a fight. What they want to know is how they can endure a strike. "Will the Union help with money? What if the Giumarras find out about

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the strike ahead of time? What about strikebreakers?" We make no promises. We talk about the Union giving support, but only to those who come to work for it full-time. And we insist the strike must be nonviolent. It is slow going, and often we have a second or third meeting with workers from the same crew. At this time we also begin to publish *El Mosquito Zumbador* ("the buzzing mosquito"). It is a one-page paper, written in Spanish and English. We take it to the crew leaders at night, or deliver it ourselves in the morning by riding the trucks carrying workers to the fields. Sometimes *El Mosquito* does nothing more than list the Union's demands and compare them to the wages the Giumarras are paying. Other times it explains new benefits, such as health and accident insurance. But always it lives up to its name, and whenever there is a rumor or an incident, it appears in *El Mosquito*. At first *El Mosquito* circulates like an underground newspaper, with workers afraid to read it on the job. Then it breaks into the open. We distribute it one morning in front of the Giumarra packing sheds at Edison. Some of the office employees refuse copies, but virtually everyone else takes a paper. One of the Giumarra brothers drives by in a yellow Cadillac and tears up the *El Mosquito* he is offered. It is hard to think of anything more helpful he could do.

Fiesta

BY THE END of the month we have gone as far as we can with house meetings. It is necessary to see if the workers feel confident enough to turn out in mass for a Union gathering at which they know there will almost certainly be company spies. We decide on a fiesta. It will have free food and *mariachi* bands, and anyone can use these as an excuse for coming, although it is obvious that the fiesta will be for something more. We are worried that not enough workers will come, but we plan for 2,000 anyway and spend the ten days before the fiesta urging our crews to come. Other problems in managing the fiesta become comic, especially the matter of what to serve. Cesar wants brains as the main dish and says he knows just the man to cook them. Everyone else groans, and for days the organizers' meetings open with someone asking if Cesar has given in on the brains. Finally, it turns out that the man who is supposed to cook them can't be gotten, and we settle on lamb instead.

Our fears about attendance prove wrong. We have more than 2,000, as farm workers who have nothing to do with Giumarra also come. We run out of lamb after several hours of serving, and by the time the speeches begin, we are serving only rice and beans and salad. It is hot inside the arena in Bakersfield where we are meeting, and the crowd is restless at the start, wanting the Union to prove itself, not really believing that they hold the key to a showdown with Giumarra. Only five people have been scheduled to speak, but it is still too many, and when Cesar's turn comes, the crowd is uneasy. He begins in a low voice, not moving his arms, barely moving his feet. He talks the whole time in Spanish, not doing what he usually does, stopping every few sentences and translating into English. I have a hard time following him, but the man next to me translates whenever I ask him a word, and I keep up that way.

It is the Union, much more than the Giumarras, which Cesar wants to talk about.

> I want to tell a story about a man with a whip [he says]. This man was an expert with a whip. He could flick the ashes off a man's cigarette while he smoked it . . . even pull a handkerchief out of a pocket with the whip. He could also kill a man with this whip, and because of his temper and his reputation, everyone was afraid of him. His workers always did what he told them, no matter how much they hated it, and his wife and his children were very quiet when he was around the house. . . . After a while, it got so that nobody would stand up to this man, and to keep in practice he began using his whip on anything that

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bothered him. A stray dog, a cat, even flies. He was so good, he could take the whip and kill a fly while it was still in midair.

All this went on for many years and then, one day, as the man was sitting on his porch, a bee came buzzing around him. It flew in his hair and around his ears and didn't pay any attention when he tried to brush it away. One of the man's workers was passing by at the time, and when he noticed what was happening, he was very surprised. "Why don't you use your whip on the bee?" he asked. "It's no bigger than any of the other things you've gone after." But the man with the whip just smiled. "You don't understand," he said. "I can kill the bee all right. That would be easy for someone like me. But bees are different from anything I've whipped before. If you go after one, they all come after you. So if I took my whip to this bee, there would be the whole hive to fight. I'd get stung for sure. . . !"

Cesar stops at this point. There is no sound, no movement, just waiting. Then he begins again.

That is what the Union means. The Union is like the bees, and the man with the whip is like the grower. He cannot do anything to one of us without having all of us come after him.

It could not have been more than a few seconds between when Cesar stopped speaking and when people began shouting. But it seemed to take forever, and I remember feeling that silence as important as everything that came after it.

Strike Vote

WE CALL for a strike vote the first week in August on the night after the men get their paychecks. We want to make sure no one has a reason for going to work the next day. The strike vote is unanimous, and the tension is so great after it that speeches are unnecessary. The meeting ends with the singing of *Nosotros Venceremos*, and for a brief moment I feel as if I were in Mississippi again, leaving a civil rights meeting. In less than half an hour we are back in the office the Union has rented in Bakersfield, planning for the next morning. So far, everything is going better than expected, but we still worry about workers we have not seen at the fiesta or the strike meeting. What will they do? How much influence will they have on their friends? Is it just fear that keeps them away?

The next morning all of us are up by three. Four of the five crews I share responsibility for have said they will join the strike. We drive to the fifth crew leader's house before he is up, and when he leaves, we follow his truck. At every house he stops, we get out of our car and ask the men who are up to stay away from work. More than half do, and by the time the truck gets to its last stop—an ice store—it is carrying only a dozen men. We get out and begin talking with the men, but this time less about the Union than who they are loyal to: those who have joined the strike or the Giumarras. Just as I think we have failed, the man sitting nearest me climbs down from the truck, then two more follow, then everyone climbs down. We promise them rides back home, and they start heading for our station wagon. Suddenly, we realize we will never fit everyone into it, and it is not until their crew leader (who has been opposing us) says that he will drive everyone home that our problem is solved. We follow his truck to make sure everyone gets back home all right, and then we go out to the fields.

The sun is up, and it is still cool, the ideal time in the day for picking grapes. But the Giumarra fields are empty. The only people at the gates I go to are pickets and police. Later we learn that, except for the few Anglo workers, only two crews have broken the strike. Despite the number of men involved, our strategy has been kept a secret and the Giumarras are caught by surprise. It is not until the following week that they realize most of their workers are not coming back, and they start breaking the strike by bringing in crews from Texas and Arizona or border cities like Calexico.

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The crews are bused in late at night so they can avoid our picket lines, but they cannot be kept under cover for more than a day or two. Most of the new workers were not told a strike was going on, and getting them to leave the fields is difficult. Roving picket lines, equipped with bull horns, speak to the workers whenever they get close to the road, and sometimes whole crews will throw down their boxes of grapes and leave the job. But most of the new workers are a long way from home and feel trapped. They have no money or transportation, and they don't know where else to look for a job. As the week goes on, new workers are brought in at a much faster rate than we can turn them away. The Giumarras also begin radio advertisements saying the strike is over, and before we can get the advertisements stopped, they have done us enormous harm.

Boycott

WE ASK the Department of Labor and Department of Immigration to check on what the Giumarras are doing (the men in a number of the new crews do not have legal work permits, and it is a violation of the law for the Giumarras not to inform anyone they hire that a strike is going on). But the government officials we speak to are of no help. Unprotected by the National Labor Relations Act, we are as handicapped as any union was before the New Deal. Even with a strike, we have no legal right to a representation election. We can only have one if the company agrees to it. Another week goes by, and it becomes clear that, if the strike is going to be successful and nonviolent, we must move to a national boycott of Giumarra grapes (we later include all California-Arizona grapes when other growers start letting the Giumarras use their labels). Organizers are sent out to key cities, and we begin cutting down on our work in California. Still, we maintain a picket line in front of the Giumarra packing sheds, and when word comes that some Teamster locals are prepared to honor the line, we run it around the clock. Along with a crew of five workers, I have a midnight-to-eight shift. Our one compensation is that it is cool at night. Not cool enough to wear a jacket but cool enough so that we don't sweat.

Most of our time is spent trying to keep awake. We get threats from some of the white packing-shed workers and from some of the high school boys who have been hired to break the strike, but while I am there, nothing happens. I will be in Cambridge, doing research of my own and working part-time for the Boston boycott, when I will learn that the men I have been picketing with were beaten up so badly they had to be hospitalized. Two of the men were in their sixties. It is enough to make me stop imagining in more detail.

Winning: 1970

I am in the office of the Ladies' Garment Workers' Union in New York when word comes that the Giumarras are about to sign a contract and that the other Delano growers are ready to follow their lead. There has been talk of victory for weeks, and now when it is official, the news seems flat. I look around me at the office the Garment Workers let the New York Grape Boycott Committee share. We have a picture of Cesar and some *Huelga* posters on the wall, but basically the typewriters and the telephones and the fluorescent lights belong here most of all. How different from the Pink House or Filipino Hall, where one never stops running into children. I cannot believe we would take the news about the Giumarras so calmly there. But then I wonder. Somewhere along the way, our organizing has come to take on a life of its own. The satisfaction it provides lies in the effort itself. When it is over and we win, there is a feeling of relief, above all, of purpose, but the intensity is gone. Perhaps we are punch-drunk in a way? I can imagine an outsider seeing us in that light. And then I stop thinking about it. A lettuce strike has begun in Salinas, and I have calls to make. □

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H. W. Benson

Labor Leaders, Intellectuals, and Freedom in the Unions

Once the insurgent Miners for Democracy had triumphed and Arnold Miller had defeated Tony Boyle by 70,373 to 56,334 for United Mine Workers president, the grueling job began of restoring a union that, under an authoritarian regime, had sadly disintegrated.

For 50 years, democracy in the UMW had been suppressed and derided. The Auto Workers union, John L. Lewis delighted in saying, pumps its members full of "democracy," but "we" give miners "eating-moey." Lewis wielded his powers of sarcasm to instill so deep a contempt for internal democracy that delegates would automatically snicker whenever some stiff-spined dissident (what honors you deserve!) would speak up at a convention for the right to elect district officers and executive board members.

In those years, a cynical realism gripped many labor analysts. Democracy, they discovered, was not necessary for effective unionism. For while rough-and-tumble labor leaders might trample over malcontents, they got results for workers, and that's what the labor movement is all about, isn't it? The Mine Workers came to symbolize the triumph of "eating-money" unionism and proved that internal democracy was only an ideological fancy of fuzzy-minded intellectuals. . .

Now, that school of side-of-the-mouth-talking, tough-thinking, rough-dealing has collapsed with the victory of the UMW insurgency.

The miners' experience shows how debased a union officialdom can become in the absence of membership control. In recent years, the UMW ceased even to protect its members from death in the mines. While miners mined coal, the officials mined the miners. And at least part of that officialdom, according to confessions of participants, was ready for murder when its power was challenged. When Joseph Yablonski was killed, hardly anyone in the labor movement would believe that it could be an inner-union assassination; their minds simply ruled out such a possibility. Think again! It *is* possible. Lloyd Green and Dow Wilson *were* murdered for leading a Painters reform movement in California against grafters. New York City building contractors *do* fear "a bullet in the back " (*New York Times*) if they talk about racketeering union officials. One painting contractor *was* almost killed. Jim Morrissey *was* beaten almost to death outside the National Maritime Union hall. In the absence of democracy, a horrible degeneration *is* possible, yes, even in our labor movement.

"So there is corruption in unions, so wherever you find people you'll find corruption of some kind. What else is new?" That kind of reaction misses the point. It is not just a matter of "exposing" union corruption, but of recognizing the nature of reform movements: the risks they run, what motivates them, what they signify. When Yablonski first announced his candidacy against Boyle, George Meany shrugged it off as an attempt by a kitchen boy to move into the dining room. When Yablonski was shot, AFL–CIO President Meany was concerned only that the murder might be used to "smear labor." Yet Yablonski was leading a fight of workers for social justice. The insurgent miners' leaders, their local officers, their rank-and-file activists, those around the Miners

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for Democracy are the living heart of our labor movement, reared in it, infused with its ideals, men who were ready to face vilification, blacklisting, even possible death for those ideals. When the union was stolen from miners, they led the drive to take it back. Not the murderers or those who hired them, not the Boyle officials with their contempt for miners, but the insurgents—*they* represented what is admirable in the labor movement. Their victory reminds us of the democratic potential of the unionized working class.

II

COMPARE the Miners' union with the Steelworkers. As secretary-treasurer of the United Steelworkers of America, I. W. Abel watched from the heights as a rank-and-file rebellion spread throughout his union and then was defeated. When discontent continued to rumble, Abel estimated the chances, looked for support in the officialdom and, once he could count on half the executive board, made the plunge. With some reluctance, he and his backers appealed to the membership against the then president, David McDonald. Sure of a majority on the executive board, Abel knew that at the worst he would at least be credited with the number of votes actually cast on his behalf. With a minority on the board, McDonald knew he needed help and proposed that the American Arbitration Association supervise the union's contested election. Abel's majority, feigning indignation at the suggestion that only outside intervention could assure a fair count, turned McDonald down.

By contrast Yablonski, who was a member of the UMW executive board, began his fight without the backing of even one other internation official. He had to take his chances with the rank-and-file miners. In steel, there was a change in the guard; in coal mining, there was a revolution.

In depth of feeling and readiness to act without awaiting official blessing, the rebel miners' movement resembled the early CIO. West Virginia mines were closed by rank-and-file "wildcat" strikes for safety legislation; mass demonstrations took over the streets of Charleston, the West Virginia capital; hundreds of men came from the mines for mass lobbying in Washington. New organizations were improvised: the Black Lung Association, the Association of Disabled Miners and Widows, the Miners Project (a public-interest law project providing an independent legal staff).

But there was a difference. In the '30s, a new workers' movement was stimulated and backed by a strong section of the established labor movement. From 1969 to 1972 the miners fought alone; the labor movement, in all its wings, remained aloof.

Inside the UMW, the officials in power handled big money as their collective private property: union treasury, insurance funds, union-owned bank, their own salaries and expenses. They manipulated these resources to stay in power, spreading cash around during elections and handling ballots like the cash.

The oppositionists had to continue to earn their living digging coal—except toward the end when some took time off to campaign. They began with few resources, no power in the union, no support from established organizations. These insurgents set out to reform their union, not to desert or replace it.

The miners had help. Modest though it was, they would have been doomed without it: a few outside liberals, a few talented attorneys (Joseph Rauh, Chip Yablonski, Clarice Feldman), a few dedicated students, a solitary congressman, and one experienced labor staff man, Meyer Bernstein, who quit a secure job with the Steelworkers to take his chances with the miner rebels. These people deserve all the praise we can give them.

One kind of support the miners did not have at all. Labor leaders remained hostile, indifferent, or passive.

At first, one might have dismissed the UMW battle as just another power contest between ins and outs. To sustain that view for long, you would have had to seal your mind tightly against the facts and busy yourself, like George Meany, with other urgent causes. If, however, you can recognize a crusade against corruption, or a gut battle for democracy, or a last-ditch effort to save a union, or a "class struggle" operating within a union, or a desperate drive for protection against killing accidents, then the failure of even a single top labor leader to intervene points up a stark fact about the contemporary labor movement: it is incapable of supporting a progressive reform struggle within its own ranks.

Not that there aren't many union leaders

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who sympathized with the miner-reformers and rejoiced in their success. I assume (without personal knowledge) that some may have privately donated modest sums to the insurgents. But not one spoke out, not even in the bleak days after the Yablonski murder when the opposition needed at least the consolation of moral support. (To be fair, there was one thin crack in this wall of conformity: Victor Reuther endorsed the Miners for Democracy, but he spoke for himself alone.) It would be easy to ascribe that failure to cowardice, or some other character weakness of this or that labor leader. But all of them? They are not really cowardly men. Then what was it?

I think they were concerned mainly with avoiding anything that might be considered stupid. There was an overwhelming consensus that it would be quixotic to act differently. A rigid, if unwritten, code governs relations among labor leaders, one that allows no legitimate place for rank-and-file reform movements and that outlaws support by the leader of one union for critics in any other. This implicit nonaggression pact comes to protect an assortment of malefactors in high places within the labor movement, even murderers. Even murderers? Otherwise, why no labor resolutions expressing horror at the Yablonski killing? Why no outcry, except locally, when Wilson and Green were shot in California? One of their murderers, then an official in the Painters union, is now serving a life sentence for the crime. When the Painters union held its convention in 1969, under tight control of its president, S. Frank Raftery, a motion to memorialize the two dead men was rejected, and the convention passed on to other business. According to the *National Observer* (December 30, 1972), I. W. Abel, himself the successful product of a kind of opposition, apologized to Tony Boyle when Meyer Bernstein left the Steelworkers to help Arnold Miller.

Those leaders who are dismayed by the labor movement's adaptation to corruptionists are on the defensive. Like a private citizen who watches impotently while thugs torment a victim, the decent labor leader feels helpless to assist the union reformer who is beaten to the ground. (Sometimes that's a figure of speech, sometimes it's a physical description.)

It wasn't always so, nor meant to be. In the 1920s, when the AFL was dominated by know-nothings who opposed unemployment insurance and ignored mass-production manufacturing, progressive unions and militant groups fought inside and outside the AFL for other policies. In the late 1920s, the CIO, as a progressive wing, was half the labor movement. In the late '40s, when he became UAW president, there was Walter Reuther. Those forces spoke out for democratization and demanded action against racketeers. There is no analogous progressive wing in the labor movement today; its absence, in my opinion, largely explains the widespread "disenchantment" of liberal intellectuals with the labor movement. And those unions which have adopted resolutions against the Vietnam war or endorsed McGovern despite Meany's "neutrality"? Even they display small public interest in promoting union democracy or in taking the offensive against corruption in the labor movement.

III

A MASSIVE CONTINUOUS mining machine was being moved on Saturday evening, July 22, 1972, from one section to another of Consol Mine No. 1 at Blacksville, West Va., when it touched an overhead power line and caught fire. Of 40 miners, 650 feet deep in the earth, nine were "inby" the machine in violation of state law; that is, they were trapped behind the machine, which blocked their passage while the ventilating fans blew murderous smoke and carbon monoxide directly at them. The 31 miners who were "outby" (on the other side of the machine) escaped; but nine were asphyxiated. Then the mine blew up. Boyle was still in office, and the union election campaign was on.

By the time the mine could be reopened to recover the bodies, it was January 1973 and Arnold Miller had taken over. UMW members were expected to go down that hole. Was it safe enough? Who could decide if not the miners' own safety man? The union's acting safety director, appointed by Boyle at a salary of $31,000, refused to go underground for the inspection. Miller discharged him. The insurgents had accused Boyle of loading the staff with political pay-rollers while miners died without union protection.

Boyle's downfall began, to set an exact date, on November 20, 1968, when Consol Mine No. 9 in Farmington, West Va., exploded.

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Seventy-eight men died. While the smoke clouds still billowed, Boyle told a nationwide TV audience that the company had an excellent safety record. Later he called it "one of the better companies to work with." That explosion and that speech resounded in every mine pit in the country.

It was not money that aroused the miners but a suspicion that their union officials hardly cared whether they died or whether they could live when they got sick and old. From Yablonski's challenge in 1969 to Miller's victory in 1972, the insurgents said little about wage rates. They needed a union to stand up for modern safety measures; to watch out for gas accumulations, explosions, and rockfalls; to protest cheaply strung power lines and short circuits; to avoid careless welding flashes. They needed help to reduce the black dust that was choking them to early disability. They wanted to protect their pension money. (A major scandal was the practice, instituted by Lewis, of keeping insurance money in noninterest bank accounts.)

No grandiose aims were emblazoned on insurgent banners. Nothing about Vietnam, no call to rally to McGovern, no radical slogans for social change. Their demands would be considered commonplace in any decent union, but miners had to wage an extraordinary fight to achieve them because they had lost their internal union democracy.

The new leadership had not even moved into the United Mine Workers offices when, on December 16, a gas explosion killed five men and hospitalized three others at a Consolidation subsidiary's No. 3 mine in Itmann, West Va. (In 1972, 31 men were killed in Consolidation mines.) Miller flew down to the mine. Later, the company president, John Corcoran, came too. In *Coal Patrol* (January 1, 1973), Tom Bethell described their meeting:

> Corcoran smiled, stuck out his hand; "I want you to know that we are willing to cooperate with you," he said. Miller shook his hand, but there was no smile with it. "I'm sick of these things," he said quietly. "Telegrams of condolence, letters from people saying they're sorry —I'm sick of it. . . . There's just too much plain, ordinary irresponsibility in this industry, and the former leadership of this union has been too close to the industry to see it or fight it. That's over now."
>
> Corcoran listened, offered optimistic comments about his company's faith in long-term research. . . . "It's hard to believe that a company making nearly 10 million dollars a day could be so troubled," Miller said later. He warned Corcoran: "I'm going to try a reasonable approach first. If that doesn't work, I'm going to try a less reasonable approach." Back in Washington, Miller followed up with a letter to Corcoran inviting him to an early-January safety discussion at UMWA headquarters.
>
> "I have seen more than my share of needless suffering in my lifetime," Miller wrote, "but I have never before been in a position to do very much to stop it. Now that has changed, and I want you to know there will be no peace in the coal industry until this bloodshed ends."

In this industry turned topsy-turvy by heavy machinery that rips away mountainsides and bores tunnels of huge diameter in the earth, throwing up storms of coal and rockdust, the companies count cave-ins, fires, broken bodies, death, silicosis, and black lung as normal conditions of doing business. They resist spending the sums necessary to make mines safer; they delay anything that might curb productivity. The new union leaders know they may soon have to confront the employers on these issues. To switch from sweetheart dealings to militant unionism means they may be forced to close down unsafe mines, to demand safety legislation and its enforcement, to be propelled deep into political action, to negotiate new deals. A revitalized UMW will need help from allies among Oil and Chemical Workers, from Steelworkers, from Transportation Workers.

Meanwhile, the reorganization and democratization of the union has to be completed. Only the three top offices changed hands when Arnold Miller, Mike Trbovich, and Harry Patrick took over. Of 18 executive board members representing the districts, only 5 had ever been elected; the others were Boyle appointees. Seven districts are scheduled to have elections by federal court order by the end of June. The union has requested the U.S. Labor Department to supervise elections in all the remaining districts under trusteeship. If the Department agrees, district autonomy will be fully restored by fall. Then there must be district conventions and finally a national convention before the end of the year at which the UMW constitution is to be rewritten.

The Miller team now has begun to fulfill a good part of its campaign platform. The new board cut top officers' salaries by 25 percent

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to 30 percent and abolished automatic expense accounts. It brought officers' pensions down from the stratosphere—Boyle's pension, for example, being cut from $50,000 to $16,000 a year. The sum of about $2 million in assorted savings was returned to the union treasury, part of which will go to raise the wages of the union's custodial staff, some of whom were getting as little as $100 a week.

WHAT, then, of reformers in other unions? The stolen elections, the corruption, the mishandling of pension money, the blacklisting, the initial failure of the Labor Department to enforce the law—that part of the miners' experience is still the plight of other unionists. We are reminded of these facts as Frank Schonfeld continues his fight in the New York Painters union for democracy and integrity. We will be nudged again when James Morrissey runs this year for president of the National Maritime Union.

In retrospect, we can see what combination of factors made possible the miners victory:

- There were courageous local leaders and rank-and-file activists without whom nothing would have been possible.
- There were prolabor professionals (liberals, intellectuals, civil libertarians, attorneys) who came forward to help.
- This collaboration made possible effective action within the union, access to the courts, and pressure on government agencies. At least this once, the law was enforced and a fair election assured.

We saw in action the often-sought "alliance between intellectuals and labor." It worked. □

HAVE YOU MOVED?

●

Send both old and new address to
DISSENT: 509 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10017

●

Allow three weeks
for change to become effective

Nancy Hooyman and John Musick

Pontiac: How People Respond to Busing

When entering Pontiac, Michigan, one is immediately struck by the number and size of its industrial plants. These industrial giants —Pontiac Motors, GMC Truck and Coach, and Fisher Body—make the rest of the city seem insignificant, and the person working within these industrial behemoths may well develop feelings of powerlessness.

Even the "heart" of Pontiac—its downtown area—is overshadowed by the plants. Few people are around during the day, and at night the streets are nearly deserted. Wide Track Drive, which encircles the downtown area, enables people to go across town without touching downtown and makes a large shopping center on Pontiac's outskirts accessible to residents of all parts of the city. Yet the downtown area is significant in terms of black-white interaction; it separates the largely black South Side from the nearly all-white North Side. Except for the racial difference, little else distinguishes the two sides of town. Both have their "newer areas" near the city boundaries as well as their "decaying neighborhoods." And in both sides of town, most neighborhoods are composed of small, single-family frame houses—the kind a factory worker can "just about afford."

A large percentage of the population in both sides of town consists of recent migrants, black and white, from the small towns and rural areas of the Southern and border states, drawn to Pontiac by the promise of good wages in the auto industry and the hope of a "better life." Many have come from the depressed areas of Tennessee, West Virginia, and Kentucky, to escape uncertain employment and the difficult, dangerous working conditions in the coal mines. To return to these conditions is not an attractive alternative; yet under the threat of forced busing for

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two years, some of the recent migrants have considered such a move.

During the summer of 1971, Federal Judge Daman Keith issued a ruling stating that Pontiac's schools had been deliberately segregated by the school board and the administration, and ordering a busing program to achieve an approximately equal racial balance in all elementary and junior-high schools. (The high schools were not affected by this order, because they were substantially integrated.)

National attention was drawn to Pontiac in 1971 when, about a week before school opened, ten of the city's school buses were bombed. Yet of greater significance was the fact that the National Action Group (NAG) had been able to mobilize large crowds to participate in several rallies before school opened, in mass picketing aimed to prevent buses from leaving their parking lots on the first day of school, and in angry demonstrations at the board of education building and many schools. Activity ran high on the neighborhood level, too. Teams of children were organized to distribute flyers urging parents to boycott busing. Phone relays were set up to pass information. Neighbors eagerly discussed the weekly rallies—and cooperated in providing child-care, rides, and other needed services to enable a maximum number of people to attend the anti-busing demonstrations.

THESE EVENTS were of particular interest to us; in previous sociological research we had observed that, traditionally, working-class people do not mobilize for political action, particularly when confrontation tactics are involved. We set out to investigate the Pontiac busing controversy in order to see what unique features accounted for such uncharacteristically intense political action among working-class people.

Our initial research was concerned with the issue of mass mobilization. We observed NAG's activities and also investigated the reasons for the split that was beginning to divide Pontiac residents—a split between those who remained politically active in NAG and others who withdrew and tried to deal with busing on an individual rather than an organizational level. We used the research techniques of "participant observation" and "unstructured interviewing"—in other words, we set out to enter the milieu of the white working-class people of Pontiac. We attended their rallies; we participated in their political activities, such as a bus trip to the state capital; we observed their neighborhood and family interactions. When interviewing people, we listened while they told their story in their own words, and later recorded as closely as possible from memory what they had said.

Hostility between blacks and whites had, of course, a great deal to do with the activities of NAG and with the resistance of white people to the busing plan. Unfortunately, too many observers have done little more than offer this explanation for the emergence of such groups as NAG. We maintain that such a simplified "explanation" is worse than none at all. We reject as inherently conservative the view that "racism" is a static quality and prefer to view human behavior in interracial settings as a product of the participants' interests and interactions, seeing race only as *one* of the factors.

In the Pontiac case, racial differences clearly did not completely explain the great groundswell of opposition to busing for integration. Integration has existed in the Pontiac high schools at least since World War II. (High school students of course are not being bused, and no significant protests have been expressed against integration at the high school level.) And after the turbulence of the first few days of the term had subsided, all our respondents who had initially kept their children out of school sent those children who would attend the neighborhood schools back to class—although black children now would be bused in to attend these schools. In every case, only those children who actually would be bused were kept out of school. Clearly then, these people did not think that going to school with blacks was the decisive factor in their opposition to busing.

NAG was formed approximately three years ago to "give people a greater voice in local political issues." After the busing court order, busing became NAG's sole issue. At first, NAG attempted massive resistance in order to force abandonment of the plan. When it became apparent that the court would not rescind its order, parents tried to force the school board to take action by keeping their children out of school—thus reducing state aid to the Pontiac

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schools. After this strategy failed, NAG assumed a national role in organizing resistance to busing. A year later, by summer 1972, NAG's efforts were almost exclusively directed toward securing passage of an amendment to the Constitution that would prohibit busing as a means of achieving racial balance in the schools.

An important factor in our respondents' attitude toward busing was whom they held responsible for the busing decision. Most of them attributed responsibility to individuals or highly visible groups of people: local NAACP lawyers, black militants, Judge Daman Keith, or "liberal do-gooders who have wrecked everything." None of them blamed the "ordinary Negro parent." People felt that most blacks also did not want busing but preferred to have their children remain in neighborhood schools. Those who blamed "the system" usually specified the courts or the NAACP as the source of the trouble.

We began our research by asking our respondents why they had become intensively involved in the busing protests—an activity that contrasts so sharply with the general norm of working-class people. From these interviews emerged several explanations.

PARENTS saw busing as a threat to their children's physical safety, their moral integrity, their emotional security, and the quality of their education. A "threat" to children is particularly poignant to working-class people, who often have a high emotional investment in their children. According to Ely Chinoy's study, *The Automobile Worker and the American Dream* (Doubleday, cloth, 1955; Beacon, paper, 1965), one of the ways auto workers adjust to dead-end jobs is by investing both emotionally and financially in the dream that their children will do better. Recent developments in the auto industry suggest that such an adjustment is more important now than it was in 1950, when Chinoy did his research. This perception of busing as a threat to the children's future is illustrated by the following quote from one of our respondents:

> I mean I've never been in groups like this before; I'm not a joiner. Course you know this time the Communists have picked the wrong issue. When you try to take the children out of a woman's arms, then you're going to have trouble. Just like me—I don't care what you do to me, but if you mess with my kids, I'll fight—I'll fight back hard.

Out of this quote emerges the sense of being a "family protector," which, we have observed, is an important aspect of the working-class man's self-image.

Many respondents saw busing also as a threat to their family life in general. Several people, for example, talked about busing as the beginning of a process in which the government would gradually remove individual freedoms, which would eventually lead to direct interference in the life of the family. In our previous research, a frequent reason given for political inactivity had been that political involvement would interfere with family life. Thus, with regard to most issues, the strong value placed on family life is an obstacle to mass political participation. Yet when the issue was busing, the value placed on family life motivated involvement. In other controversies, people had cited work schedules and child-care responsibilities as major reasons for noninvolvement. In the busing controversy, however, people made elaborate adjustments in order to become politically active; people, for example, worked less hours, brought their children to rallies, or cooperated in baby-sitting arrangements.

There was another motivation for this intense political involvement; people were organizing to preserve conditions from which they believed to be benefiting. Although to a middle-class observer, the amenities available to the Pontiac factory worker may seem minimal, for many Pontiac residents—especially for the recent migrants from the coal-mining areas—their present situation was a decided improvement over the past. Many of these peo- had sacrificed much to achieve even a small degree of security; consequently, they now were willing to sacrifice further to preserve what they had attained. They thought they had much to lose by inactively accepting the changes they believed would be brought about by busing. By contrast, the risks in taking action against busing seemed to them small. The greatest objective risk was probably in participating in the NAG school boycott; yet even here most respondents perceived a low risk, at least initially. Although school and court authorities threatened charges of child

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neglect against parents participating in the boycott, most respondents believed that jail sentences would not be imposed. NAG leaders had successfully convinced people of the strength of their numbers. As one respondent said:

> I figure they can't throw us all in jail. There's about 3000 of us. There ain't but 360 [sic] days in a year and they all gotta have their day in court, so how can they do it. Besides, who's going to pay the welfare for all these men if they go to jail. So I don't think they'll throw 'em in, maybe just fine 'em.

At first, the issue of the politicians' unresponsiveness was another reason for mobilization. In our research in both Pontiac and other working-class communities, we have observed that most working-class people do not expect or want to participate actively in government, except by voting. They generally assume that their elected representatives will conduct governmental affairs to promote their interest. The busing plan, however, made people feel that they had been "let down," that the "agreement" between them and their elected representatives had been violated. This greatly upset people and pushed them, at least temporarily, toward political action. We observed, however, that the politicians' unresponsiveness was not as salient for working-class persons as the issue of control over their children. This contrasted sharply with the attitudes of the middle-class NAG members, whose sense of being mistreated by government was a basis for continuous political activity.

WITHIN A MONTH after school opened, there was a marked change in the orientation toward busing. This shift was especially noticeable to us among the people we had been interviewing weekly since the beginning of the school year. People who had previously vowed that they would *never* allow their children to be bused, even if it meant moving out of the state or going to jail, had changed their minds rather quickly. A few were reluctant to talk about the change, apparently embarrassed that now their actions were inconsistent with their previous protestations. Those who did talk, still expressed many of the old fears but said the risks involved in further resistance were too great. In contrast with their earlier active participation in NAG, they now were no longer involved or even aware of NAG's events. This change in orientation occurred at a time when NAG was extremely active in Pontiac and, from an outsider's perspective, did not appear to be losing mass support. We therefore sought an explanation for this difference between the people who adapted to the busing situation through various personal means and those who continued to try to stop busing by working through NAG's organizational channels.

We interviewed active NAG members who consciously identified with NAG as an organization—and also others who had participated in many of NAG's early activities but did not conceive of themselves as NAG members. The former were interviewed at NAG events, while we talked with the latter in their own neighborhood. The "neighborhood" people were the first to send their children back to school and to withdraw from active participation in NAG.

The neighborhood in which we interviewed our respondents and which had been randomly chosen was a solidly working-class area. All respondents were in manual occupations, primarily in semiskilled factory work, and fell within our "working-class" income criteria ($5,000–$10,000).

This group of "neighborhood" people saw busing as a problem primarily because it involved loss of control over one's children. Whenever a parent sends his child to school and, to some extent, gives up control of his child, his anxiety usually is mitigated by the fact that the child remains in the neighborhood, in a known and trusted school—and therefore he feels that the child is still within his domain of influence. Our working-class respondents constantly stressed the importance of this control—of having the mother at home to supervise personally the children. They were usually not willing to delegate this responsibility to child-care centers or baby-sitters. Many working-class people are not even favorably inclined to sending their children to camp, or to a playground outside the neighborhood. Thus it is understandable that the prospect of turning one's children over to the "government" to be bused to a distant section of the city seemed particularly threatening. One of our neighborhood respondents who lived within two blocks of two schools expressed his feelings as follows:

> What I can't see is how I have to send my

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kids half across town to school when I have one school right over here [pointing down the block] and another one right over there [pointing two blocks away]. That's why I bought this house, so my kids could go *right here* to school.

All our neighborhood respondents voiced similar objections, even a woman who favored busing and had sent her children to school on the first day of the term, despite pressure from her neighbors to join the boycott.

Many people raised the related issue of safety. Whatever the objective reality, most whites are convinced that the crime rate in many black neighborhoods in Pontiac is very high. The problem of traffic accidents was another salient point. Shortly after the busing began, the rear axle fell off a bus; this was later traced to faulty maintenance. After NAG had initiated a court suit challenging the bus drivers' competence, a court-appointed arbitrator found a large number of drivers unfit. In some cases, more than physical safety was involved. Several people feared that their children might suffer emotional problems in the different surroundings, especially in the atmosphere of tension that existed at the beginning of the school year.

THE FINAL DISTINCTION between the "neighborhood people" and the NAG activists was in their mode of adaptation to the busing crisis. Both immediate reactions were similar—a united effort to resist busing by whatever means available. At first, when reversing the court decision seemed possible, everyone joined together to exert maximum pressure toward that goal. Once busing seemed inevitable many people chose their individual methods of adaptation based on their own personal definition of the problem. Since "neighborhood" people defined the problem essentially as one of losing control and of the safety of their children, they moved to deal with these concerns within the existing situation.

In one family we interviewed, the change from trying to avert a crisis to adapting to an "inevitable" situation was particularly marked. At first, shortly after school started, these parents were very involved in NAG activities—attending rallies weekly and passing out literature in the neighborhood. They talked of sending their children to a "neighborhood academy" rather than having them bused. They had put up their home for sale and even were talking of returning to the South if necessary. Three weeks later, they were sending their children back to the public schools. When asked why they had changed their minds, they initially avoided the question, but finally responded:

> Well, they sent us all those letters. They said there'd be a $10 fine for every day they [the children] didn't attend. So we figured we had to do it. And I just couldn't afford to send my kids to the Freedom School. They were asking $10 for each child. . . . We've accepted busing as long as the kids stay out of trouble, and don't get hurt. I told them [the children] to be careful. . . .

In the meantime, their house was still up for sale.

Another woman, who had been active in NAG but had later withdrawn, adapted to busing by using her large station wagon to drive her own and several other children to school every day, to keep some measure of control in the new situation.

With the older children, truancy became a problem. One woman believed that truancy occurred because children going to school in a strange neighborhood thought they would not be caught. To meet this truancy problem, she had organized a citywide group of mothers, "Mothers Against Skipping," (MAS) to watch out for truant children.

> RESPONDENT: We're going to put a stop to our kids skipping school. As soon as your kid skips more than one day, you're automatically a member. I've got mothers calling me all the time—asking me to check on their children because they've been skipping.
>
> INTERVIEWER: How does it work?
>
> RESPONDENT: Well, we're trying to get at least one mother in each section of town. Then when a kid is seen around there we call the "MA" in that area, and she goes out and gets him.

MAS now was seen as a more appropriate means than NAG in meeting the problem of maintaining control over one's children.

We did not interview any NAG activists in their homes and therefore cannot compare them on this basis with the "neighborhood" respondents. In many cases, we were also unable to get standard demographic data on NAG members. We feel reasonably certain, however, that most of them were either middle-class or approach-

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ing middle-class status (with white-collar occupations and $15,000 + income). Wherever we obtained socioeconomic data, this conclusion was verified. Most of the NAG people we interviewed considered busing at best a questionable idea, and at worst a "ridiculous experiment." None of them took any of the steps used by the "neighborhood" people to adopt to busing. The NAG activists believed that the government, in mandating busing, was unresponsive to their crucial needs. This feeling was expressed by a man on the NAG bus trip to the state capital, organized to persuade the governor and the state legislators to "do something":

> There's so much more involved here than just busing. It has to do with representative government. The politicians just don't care about the people they are supposed to serve. That's what bothers me.

To NAG activists, as predominantly middle-class people, the idea of entrusting their children to agents of the school system seemed not as threatening as to the "neighborhood" people. What they resented was that the government imposed the busing policy upon them without their consent. Therefore, their actions were directed toward influencing the political system—writing and phoning congressmen, lobbying, boycotting, picketing, marching, and petitioning for a constitutional amendment. Their leaders emphasized working within the political system, using the established means for redress of grievances:

> We have the most beautiful system in the world. We must not talk of destroying it. Let's use the system to do what it is meant to do. We can work within it—we can recall congressmen or print ads of their voting records.

Even before busing became an issue, the leaders of NAG were intensely involved in political activity:

> INTERVIEWER: I'm interested in how you originally got started.
>
> RESPONDENT: Well, it started just as a political action group. We were interested in a number of things that were happening in local politics.
>
> INTERVIEWER: Can you remember anything in particular that first got you interested?
>
> RESPONDENT: No, I can't think of anything. *We just wanted to get involved.*

In contrast to the ongoing political concerns of the NAG activists, the short-term political activity of the "neighborhood" people centered around the immediate issue of busing—and the desire for safety and for control of their children. Though "the neighborhood" people's individualized solutions were often piecemeal and sporadic, they were practical adaptations to a difficult situation. Because they identified specific targets of change against which direct action was possible, the "neighborhood" people could feel more personally efficacious than the political NAG activists who were trying to modify an abstract and seemingly unchangeable system.

Our analysis shows that the original mass base of NAG membership in Pontiac is eroding, since that original base was composed primarily of working-class people. As the people directly affected by the Pontiac busing situation turned to other forms of activity, NAG's constituency began to change. NAG now consists primarily of middle-class people who have the interest and resources for political activity on a sustained basis, as well as of a growing number of people active in right-wing movements. The latter were particularly prominent in the NAG national convention, which we observed in February 1972. By this time, NAG was almost totally divorced from the problems of busing in Pontiac, seeing itself as the leader of a nationwide fight against busing. By incorporating other groups throughout the nation, NAG has become involved in issues other than busing, and so its appeal to the Pontiac working-class person has become somewhat limited.

WE HAVE REPORTED on a number of legitimate concerns and fears expressed by white working-class people affected by busing. Our report, in one sense, is unbalanced, for it lacks consideration of the problems faced by Pontiac's black residents. We do, of course, not assume that black families did not feel threatened by busing, or that all blacks were in favor of busing. Blacks indeed probably had greater reason for fear, especially in the first few days of school, since demonstrations were taking place at the white schools to which black children were being bused. We recognize this deficiency in our report; but, as white researchers, we do not feel competent to describe the black perspec-

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tive. We welcome such a report by black researchers.

We hope that our analysis, insofar as it leads to constructive efforts to reduce black/white tensions created by busing, may benefit everyone concerned. It is in this spirit that we make the following suggestions.

Great care should be taken to see that no student, black or white, receives a poorer education resulting from busing. In Pontiac, a shortage of funds forced a number of cutbacks that probably affected the quality of instruction. The school day had to be shortened so that buses could transport two sets of students. A number of "special programs" also had to be eliminated to free money for busing.

A money shortage can probably be expected wherever busing is implemented. Local residents have registered their objections to busing by voting against funding proposals for busing in local schools. Thus, school authorities under court order to implement a busing plan have had no choice but to take the money from other programs

If this dilemma is to be avoided, and since segregation and inferior schools for blacks are national issues, the money to cope with busing must come from national sources. It seems unfair to place the financial and social cost of ending segregation on such relatively poor communities as Pontiac, simply because the majority of blacks is clustered in these areas. The people living in Pontiac's all-white suburbs, including most of the executives of the local GM plants, have at least as much responsibility for the segregation suffered by blacks as do the working-class people in the city areas. Therefore, more equitable means of sharing these burdens seem to be a necessary first step in easing the tensions surrounding the busing issue.

A number of specific strategies might have eased the tensions in Pontiac and could be utilized in the future in other communities undergoing busing. The feeling that busing is being imposed by an "unrepresentative government" could be reduced by involving an interracial group of parents, over a period of several months before school opens, in planning and implementing the busing program. Parental fears could be allayed by having black and white parents discuss common worries with school personnel before school begins. Action could be taken to ensure the bused children's physical safety. All drivers could be screened for competence, frequent maintenance and safety checks could be made, and evidence of these screenings and checks offered to the public. Parents could help reduce their children's fears about a new situation by accompanying them on the bus or serving as teachers' aides within the schools. Harmful rumors could be avoided by providing parents with accurate information about the busing procedure. The concerns parents expressed about physical distance could be lessened by arranging for parents with cars to pick up any neighborhood children who become ill at school and whose parents are unable to get them. Again, since busing attempts to deal with a national problem, it seems reasonable to use federal funds to pay parents to provide such services.*

In Pontiac, many of the youths, particularly at the junior-high level, have shown that they can get along with blacks. In one of our "neighborhood" families, the daughter said she saw few problems with busing, while the father was vehemently opposed to it. School administrators might structure group meetings of youths and parents so that parents might learn more about their children's school experiences. When the experiences are positive, parents' fears may gradually be reduced; if they are negative, parents, children, and school personnel would be accurately informed of what is happening and may then work to resolve conflicts.

Regardless of its merits, busing will probably continue to be a major technique toward equalizing educational opportunities, until a better strategy is devised. Many hope that it will facilitate understanding between whites and blacks. However, where people perceive busing as a threat to their children and to some of their most cherished values, increased racial harmony is unlikely. These problems must be minimized if busing is not to be a cause of greater racial antagonisms. □

* These suggestions, made with the benefit of hindsight, might help guide school districts that will be implementing busing in the future. No criticism of the Pontiac school administrations is implied.

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Joseph Diamond

Less Bread, More Taxes

Radicals and liberals have always championed progressive income tax as the ideal form of taxation—though its potential of placing the burden of social costs on the rich has never been more than window dressing. The large incomes that are subject to top income-tax rates are generally the result of investment and, obviously, nobody will make such investments if the government is going to get 70 percent of the proceeds. In practice, and to permit the system to work, all kinds of loopholes (above all, capital gains) are permitted. Thus Gabriel Kolko claims that all classes pay a total of about 32 percent, including all forms of taxes. Even if he exaggerates in degree, he can hardly be wrong about the tendency.

The progressive income tax, so far, has failed to actually obtain large amounts of money, uniformly and fairly, from the well-off and the rich. This and several other considerations give rise to a number of ideas I would like to propose concerning taxes.

(1) We need much higher taxes to reverse the social and physical deterioration of the country. In 1966 total U.S. tax collections were 28 percent of the national income, a ridiculously low figure compared to Sweden's total of 46 percent (see J. A. Pechman, *Federal Tax Policy* [New York: Norton, 1971], p. 290). A decent health plan alone will cost about $100 billion a year, and that is only the beginning. There are critical problems in housing, care of the aged, urban decay, education, social dislocation resulting from shifts in technology and natural resources (especially energy), and there is the associated question of pollution. All these problems can be solved if there is the will to devote real social effort. But the bill will be high, hardly less than that for a socialized medical plan. Any possible cuts in military expenditures, and I assume we will not propose to disband the army, are insignificant compared with these amounts.

(2) We must cease to expect a revolution via the Internal Revenue Service and settle instead for a fair count in tax collections. The justice of the system of tax *collections* is only one side of the story; the question of tax *disbursements*, i.e., of social expenditures, is quite another. For no matter *who* pays, for instance, the taxes to support a medical plan—both the rich man and the poor man have only one appendix to be removed, and in all probability the rich man will continue to consult a private surgeon and thus derive no benefits from the plan. Similarly, most other social expenditures will be financially progressive in their effects.

(3) We must simplify the tax system and wherever possible eliminate evasion. This would reduce the widespread atmosphere of cynicism that surrounds the tax issue. It is essential to eliminate the citizen's distrust to gain his support for higher total taxation.

THE PROPOSALS I have in mind concern the personal income tax and the value-added tax.

For the personal income tax, I would propose that the present graduated tax be replaced by a fixed rate, which cannot be evaded, and that the distinction between income and capital gains be abolished. The rate should be placed somewhere between the low capital-gains rate and the higher income rates—say, between 35 and 40 percent. All deductions should be eliminated except for personal exemptions, which should be high enough (say $1,600 a head, or possibly $1,800 for adults and $1,400 for minors, to benefit very small households) to relieve earners of modest incomes. A high personal exemption in itself introduces a considerable degree of progressivity into the tax system. E.g., a family of four, with a total exemption of $6,400 and a flat rate of 37.5 percent above this exemption would pay nothing on an income of $6,000, and 13.5 percent on $10,000, 21.5 percent on $15,000, 29.4 percent on $30,000, and 35.1 percent on $100,000. Even at present, the personal exemption is far more important than deductions in reducing the ordinary person's tax burden (Pechman, *op. cit.*, p. 69).

If this system were extended to include the idea of the negative income tax (that is, cash payments to those whose income falls below their exemptions, and who are in a sense cheated of the benefit of the exemptions), then it becomes equivalent to paying everyone $600 (i.e., 37.5 percent of $1600, or, if lower ex-

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emptions were applied to minors than to adults as mentioned above, $525 for minors and $675 for adults), after which *all* deductions *including* exemptions are eliminated. With or without the negative tax feature, the flat tax rate would eliminate any excuse for not withholding the tax from interest and dividend payments, including those to foreign residents. This proposal, with the negative tax feature, somewhat resembles the McGovern proposal, but is considerably less extravagant and so may be a valid political possibility.

I would propose that we not simply oppose the value-added tax (VAT), as a sales tax, which it is. Instead we should concern ourselves with the details of this tax in order to eliminate its regressive aspect. Blanket opposition means that one will have no influence over the kind of VAT that is finally adopted. Eventually it will surely be adopted, as indicated by the example of Europe—where even the progressive Scandinavian countries have adopted very high VAT rates (15 percent in Denmark) —and because VAT constitutes a powerful export subsidy, for international agreement allows it to be refunded on export. This assumes that VAT replaces some other form of internal taxation that may not be refunded on export, such as part or all of the corporate income tax or part or all of any future increase in the corporate income tax that might otherwise be necessary.

A study quoted by Joseph Pechman demonstrates that a sales tax is not necessarily regressive. This study shows that, when food is exempted from taxation (as it is in New York State, for example), the tax is generally proportional up to incomes of about $15,000 (in 1965). This is not surprising when we remember that such major budget items as income and other taxes, rent, and interest are also free of sales tax. This means that after a workingman pays his income and other taxes, rent or mortgage interest, and food bill, he hasn't got much left to spend on items subject to the sales tax —a situation quite different for the well-off. The value-added sales tax could be made progressive rather than proportional by exempting other, carefully chosen items. Prescription drugs, medical expenses not covered by a medical plan, and clothing are natural choices, but the difficulty with clothing is it includes luxury expenditure that should not be exempted. An excellent suggestion I have heard is to exempt children's clothing. This exemption, like those of food and medical expenses, would have a powerful political appeal if pushed energetically by the liberal and labor movements, but this appeal cannot be mobilized with a policy of blanket opposition to VAT.

It is one of the advantages of a sales tax such as VAT that it is largely self-policing. For each link in the chain of production is eager to report the VAT payments he has made to previous links in order to receive credit for them on the tax he must pay. As a result, the government can keep tabs on every nickel in the economy, which helps in the collection of the corporate and also the individual income tax, as well as of the sales tax itself.

Another effect of sales tax such as VAT is its relation to inflation. This effect is best shown by an illustration. Consider a workingman ten years ago who earned, say, $100 a week and earns today perhaps $150 a week—yet his living standard is the same. Nevertheless, he has moved into a higher income-tax bracket because of his nominally higher income. This sort of erosion of the tax exemption by inflation does not occur with the sales tax, because its exemptions (food, rent, etc.) are in kind, not in dollars.

These proposals may startle a radical public. Aside from any objective criticisms that may be made, I suggest that this surprise, even indignation, is the result of factors such as these:

(1) Radicals, like other Americans, regard any tax as an outrage.

(2) The tradition of corruption in politics is so deep that the reaction, partly correct and partly self-serving, is "what, give those crooks more money to steal!"

(3) The assumption may linger, unstated, that the pre-World War II situation can somehow be recreated, when only the well-off paid *any* income tax (and when the government rendered very few services to the badly off).

Such attitudes can only hinder a reasonable settlement of the tax question, which is absolutely essential if the country is to be pulled out of its long slide into economic misery and social bitterness. Finally, I would suggest that a substantially higher tax level is the only way to reduce unemployment without serious inflation. □

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David Bromwich

Angst-pushers & Austenites

That movies can accomplish certain narrative chores more smoothly than novels is a truism, but when we begin looking at specific moments from specific films, the apparently slight advantage in facility takes on the character of a difference in kind. Conrad in *The Secret Agent,* preparing the murder of Mr. Verloc, had to lay out the right weapon pages in advance, and view it with the eye of the murderer without yet urging it forcibly on the reader, so that the crime would still come across as a shock. Hitchcock, photographing the same scene, had Sylvia Sidney glance over at the knife for a split second, uncomfortably, then showed the silver instrument glinting under the light, and performed in a few smart instants an operation that had taken the novelist all day to achieve inadequately. The camera is quick to spot motives. It is quick to "explain" almost anything, and lends itself readily to the allegorization of things as they are. When Fellini hauled his monster in on the beach during the closing moments of *La Dolce Vita,* Mastroianni had merely to gaze in its direction for the audience to learn and in a single stroke be convinced of his identity with it. Yet in a novel this would have been heavy going —we shouldn't be found extending our confidence so easily.

Once, though, having paid our respects to the autonomy of cinema, we catch a good number of films trying to do exactly what novels have always done. The effects they aim at are, strictly speaking, literary and not at all plastic. My own modest illustrations show a new medium being used at its liveliest to animate a new sense of reality: we see the literary palimpsest only to realize how much we have gained. But this is not ordinarily the case. The revolutions which Renoir and, a generation later, Godard looked forward to have been a long while in coming. Very often, what we get in serious-minded films is the skeleton of a novel, or a fictional mood, or a whole literary tradition barely and a little embarrassingly fleshed out with pictures. To start with a salient bad example: Anthony Perkins is readying himself for the overdose of tranquilizer capsules that will clear the screen of his agony. "We've been out there," he says tremulously sobbing out the words, "where nothing is." Tuesday Weld is beside him, puzzled by this strange man who is her competitor in neurosis. She is heading for the badlands, too—will he tell the Great Secret? Alas, suicides leave behind no runes. He dies in her lap and she goes on living, "playing," as the final soliloquy archly has it, a sadder and a wiser girl.

The movie is *Play It As It Lays,* and we can say plainly enough what it bodes. Existentialism has made it to Hollywood at last: twenty years late, to be sure, but with the true narcissistic glow of discovery. Joan Didion, who adapted the screenplay from her own novel, has just one serviceable area of feeling. She writes out of a neurasthenic or claustrophobic sense of the world of objects—highways, "the media," Antonioni smokestacks, above all lifeless people—closing in about her and forming along their terrible dull ranks to stop her breathing. The mood has its convincing moments but it is not, I venture to say, inexhaustible. It brought Miss Didion two or three good essays and a great many bad ones: reading about her very public fatigue is fatiguing; we, too, want to breathe, and she won't let us, and out of sheer monotony the artistic rewards get slimmer with each passing paragraph. Of course the movie does have a bit of uplift at the end. Why live? the heroine asks herself. Rhetorically, we need hardly add, since she answers, Why not? I find this depressing to contem-

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plate, maybe because it reveals the author in her American and psychoanalytically optimistic phase—Europe and existentialism are in this respect a false bottom.

Those coy last words, so weirdly irrelevant, so awkward, so sweet to spite all the sour, call to mind a less ponderous but even more psychoanalytic Anthony Perkins movie, *Fear Strikes Out*. There, however, at least we knew where we stood. The film was about a baseball star whose surest victory had to be won on the couch. But all of *Play It As It Lays* takes place on the couch without saying so. The story concerns a high-fashion model, Maria Wyeth, who grew up in a small desert town, came to hate the success her beauty made available, and at some point evidently had a breakdown. Maria, though much is made of her sensitivity, strikes me as on the whole less interesting than that baseball player. Well, never mind. In the terms set by this film her affectless vulnerability is the higher sanity; the people around her (scratch one saintly suicide) really are visibly worse. The deeper trouble here is a nagging literalism. Various artificial settings, even a film-within-film, have been devised so that the heroine may freely associate about her past life, fill in gaps in the accountability of her present behavior, and generally put the viewer on the spot as analyst. Can we bear the responsibility? Should we?

A more resourceful artist like Antonioni will avoid quite so tactless an approach. He will give us the Monica Vitti character, say, in *Red Desert*, making a parable of her isolation as she tells her son a bedtime story. The story will be about a child who lives all alone on an island, surrounded on every side by rocks the color of flesh, and who after losing the only company of her life, a ghostly ship in the cove, hears the rocks crying out to her with the sound of everybody and everything. But Joan Didion is a journalist not a poet of the neurotic edge. Her manner owes a good deal to *Nausea*, yet she cannot follow Sartre in rendering the separateness which is her subject down into concrete images. Her screenplay is full of aimless chatter, yet neither she nor her heroine rises above the sump to comprehend it. Antonioni and his mentor, the novelist Pavese, artists who worried about putting the "gabble" of everyday life into their work, discovered ways of letting dialogue slide by as airily as its utterance required. Antonioni might do this by resting his camera on a speaker long after he had finished and someone else had begun talking; Pavese, lacking that option, might allow the narrator's eye to wander out into the landscape, into some trifling observation. Miss Didion and her director, Frank Perry, try for the same effect but simply don't know how to manage it. They have got the technique without getting the point, and their camera wanders indeed, wanders brave and free, from the time one remark ends till the time another starts up—when, calmly, like a great careful beast of prey, it settles upon the face of the next actor in sequence. By that route the conversation slows down to meet the pace of the camera. This is what I mean by an embarrassing cinematic treatment of a literary idea.

Says Maria: "I've never been much impressed with catatonia as a life-style." "Life-style" is one of those horrible fungus words which a film like this only seems to hold itself above.

Again: "Maybe I was holding all the aces, but what was the game?" If the line were in a more enjoyable, that is, a more blatantly trashy film, it would almost certainly be camp. Finally (we have now left Maria for a better): "That's what I like about you, Carter. A 'cult' director with a nose for commerce." Such talk may be the norm among our more rancid movie agents, but though this film was made in Hollywood and about Hollywood, I cannot believe every character was meant to be an agent. Miss Didion, by the way, is said to have a good ear for dialogue: the samples given above are representative.

When image and word fail alike, we have to rest with the gross consolation of symbols. An honest symbol is itself directly sensible as a concrete image, like those gnarled tree roots in *Nausea* which remind the narrator of a world that solidly and threateningly exists beyond his own consciousness. *Play It As It Lays* in contrast has been rather deliberately filled with symbols. Maria narrates, yet the symbols remain beyond her grasp; they are pointed straight at us, the audience. Something of this sort must have been what Eliot had in mind when he spoke of the "objective correlative": only, he would have wanted the detail to rise precisely from the material. *Play It As It Lays* is shot through with objective correlatives but they are, as it were, unloaded on the heroine

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unawares: we do not feel them as things at all peculiar to her mind. One such symbol is the desert Maria is always driving through. No comment needed there, surely. Another is a big ugly rattlesnake that crawls through said desert at strategic intervals, when Maria is having a low time altogether elsewhere. But after this, I confess, my list runs wild. The main event of the movie is Maria's abortion, during which we see the last of the fetus scraped into a wastebasket. The whole business is "timely" in a most revolting way—quotation marks are called for, as with nearly every aspect of such films—but the worst of it comes afterward, with Maria flashing abortion every time she sees wastebaskets (there are not a few). And drains (the doctor was caught washing his hands). And yes, she must even show off the dreadful knowing when she gets herself a drink—pointedly dropping a shrimp in the liquid to make a miniature fetus. Thus is the viewer employed as a tabulator on some sturdy and reliable piece of machinery. At the risk of appearing silly, I beg leave to inform the men and women responsible for this machine that sometimes a shrimp is just a shrimp.

Where does it all come from, this breezy acquiescence in joylessness? The answer lies in Miss Didion's borrowings, or as I had much rather call them, her plagiarisms. Borrowing, after all, happens when one artist puts another to use for his own ends. But this movie doesn't put to use; it uses, it sucks dry. I trace one detail to a source so recent it hardly looks credible, yet suspicion dies hard: those false teeth lying scattered on the pavement, slipped from the head of an anonymous highway victim, can be found in Daniel Fuchs's Hollywood novel of a few years back. But that is no great matter. The grand larceny, once we get past Antonioni in the early scenes, is a wholesale expropriation of Bergman. *Through a Glass Darkly* is there in full battle dress when Maria bubbles about the man who saw God in the form of a spider. We have only one problem. The story here sounds "inspired" whereas Bergman gave it a dramatic context—the incestuous sister having her vision just as a helicopter, buzzing violently, with its spindly legs very like a spider's, landed outside the window to fly her to a mental hospital. The intensities of the last half-hour in Bergman almost redeem the holy mess that went before it; in *Play It*

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As It Lays, right as clockwork, we get more of the numbing same.

Similarly with *Winter Light,* which is given a fling in the relationship between Maria and her ex-husband Carter. Like Bergman's pastor and his lover, these two have placed themselves beyond love and hate; they know each other too well; nothing is to be done. In *Winter Light* two people do their level worst to destroy each other during the course of a ten-minute talk, and when it is all over and they have survived, the film opens into what has to be among the strangest moments in narrative art, an indeterminacy so total and baffling that we understand Bergman can now take the story wherever he likes. Again this belongs to plot and character, which are never properly established in *Play It As It Lays.* But I spoke earlier of the tactlessness of this slick horror, and I should like to dwell on the point briefly. Anthony Perkins announcing that he has discovered nothingness has about the tact of a Tennessee Williams spinster wailing to us, "I'm really a very lonely woman." And yet that is only the beginning—we must be witnesses, too, as he takes one handful of capsules, takes another, sets himself down to expire, and expires. The suicide in *Winter Light* was offstage. The pastor came upon the dead man on a river bank, near his parked car, and the roaring din of the rapids drowned out even his own thoughts as he stared ahead vacantly. This seemed to me just and necessary, a part of our general mystery.

Only a few things in life reduce us to our last privacy, but I should prefer to have movies treating them with a little more conscious tact, since we all grow sick on watching them as a matter of course. A list of these things would surely include: suicide, the sexual act, praying.

AT THIS JUNCTURE I depart from Miss Didion and Mr. Perry, none too soon, and arrive at a director who shares with them a certain formal limitation but possesses, in an almost frightening measure, the virtue of tact. Eric Rohmer was a leader of the *Cahiers du Cinéma* group that once counted among its members François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, and Claude Chabrol. A glance at the names tells us how far we have yet to come in this country toward merging the art of film criticism with the art of film. At all events, Rohmer touched the critics and then the public with parts four and five of his Moral Tales, and he has recently delivered the sixth and last part under the title *L'Amour, L'Après-midi,* which is curiously translated as *Chloe in the Afternoon.* All of Rohmer's films are essentially the same; all are, to a degree, satisfying. My favorite happens to be *My Night at Maud's,* which had Jean-Louis Trintignant exquisitely treading the line between fidelity and—perhaps the obverse here would be stolidity. The question was whether to submit to the embraces of a charming and intelligent woman in the warmth of her own home, or remain faithful to a lovely but less neatly accessible true love. The temptation was not succumbed to, nor is it ever in these three films. But this is Rohmer's constant subject: the sexual temptation, entertained in the short run before being permanently laid to rest. There was a twist, though, in *My Night at Maud's,* in a denouement which revealed to Trintignant that his true love had been conducting an affair with the other woman's husband, so that he was left alone as the missing link of chastity. And this brings us to a single quality special to Rohmer's work: his subject has made him the master of what might be called the soft irony.

Unfortunately, his repertoire so far is narrowly circumscribed. His diapason is made of chords neither higher nor deeper than the soft ironic. In *Claire's Knee* the ironies have got even softer and in *Chloe* they turn to fluff, about to blow away. The difficulty may be that Trintignant, together with the Christian obsession written into his part (there was an enormously long and free discussion of Pascal), was able to fill out the role of the tempted bourgeois with more idiosyncratic zest than it deserved. This, however, interests me less at the moment than the problem of style in Rohmer's films. I have not seen anywhere remarked what seems to me at once a very obvious and a very queer fact, that he makes use of none of the resources which are the unique property of a film director. His camera, stationed a bit above or a bit below or straight opposite the face that is speaking, keeps its domestic peace and scarcely moves at all. The wider orientation shots are perfunctory from start to finish. His movies, in short, bear the same relation to the possibilities of cinema that closet drama bears to the possibilities of theater. I wonder the more

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at this seeming poverty of means when a publicity notice refers to his doctoral dissertation on F. W. Murnau, that most visual of directors. Still, the truth is that Rohmer's stories have not demanded anything beyond the means he uses, since every turn of a plot revolves around those small motions of grace in the eyes, the mouth, the voice of a character which might as well be seen occurring indoors.

Chloe in the present film is a cosmopolitan vagrant who springs out of our hero's past at a time when he is settling into married life. She is quick-witted, sexy, and without affectation, and she is played by Zouzou in a performance for the fiery like of which we have to recall Jean Seberg in *Breathless* (though in truth Chloe is a more compelling type than the Godard doll, and Zouzou knows it). Yet something has gone awry, for Chloe is more fascinating than, according to Rohmer's moral, she has any right to be. Chloe is trying to charm the hero into infidelity; toward which end she must charm us as well, if the story is to be effective; but in fact she intrigues us far more than does the hero. We should be grateful to the director who made a film about Chloe, about Zazie grown up, instead of soothing us with the sweet anxieties of an executive pondering the violation of his own code of honor.

Now, however, I must out with the entire complaint. This spineless bourgeois is turning up at the center of too many European films, and in the work of too many directors whose work I normally loved to attend: he was there in *La Dolce Vita,* and in Truffaut's *The Soft Skin,* and he returned for what looked to be a last round in Bertolucci's extraordinary *The Conformist.* But with the gradual caving in of any substance in his tempted hero, Rohmer has made the same boring soul the subject of *Chloe.* Films about this character, however much they try for the subtle or jostling ambiguity, are at last failures in persuasion, because we don't have on our hands a case of Strether nodding. Actually, we get not so much ambivalence as hesitation—the chronic and unnerving hesitation of a coward. There is clearly nothing wrong with that so long as the character is movingly portrayed, as he is in these examples; yet the subject cannot be endlessly appealing to a movie audience, and the directors of these films have been considerate enough to step beyond it. I am in some doubt as to the prospect facing Rohmer, but I hope that he will do the same.

The gap has widened between *Maud* and *Chloe:* no longer does the hero resist seduction for reasons of the heart which the mind will never understand. Rather, it is an affair of will, the merest velleity. This movie is good fun all the same, the way Rohmer always is, the way (to make a leap in magnitude) Bergman was fun in *Smiles of a Summer Night.* His screenplays are always full, they are written out, we enjoy listening to them; and then, he is a wonderful observer of actors in the medium close-up. He brings the plot around in *Chloe* with an epiphany, like the contact with Claire's knee but even more concentrated in time. The hero has got hold of an English baby-sitter with whom only his wife can communicate, and for the sake of wife and baby-sitter and baby all together, and to break the ice, he enters the baby's room with a sweater pulled halfway over his head. Catching himself in the mirror, he sees that in spite of all his desires he is at bottom a foolishly and contentedly home-bound man. At his last rendezvous with Chloe, stripping for action, he will discover the same pose in a different mirror, change his mind, and head for home. The literary device has been dramatically placed and therefore commands our attention and our appreciation.

YET there are things beyond a success of this order which we all care more about. Truffaut in *Shoot the Piano Player,* Chaplin in *City Lights,* Bergman in *Naked Night* and *The Seventh Seal*—even, God knows, *Mabuse, the Gambler; Alphaville; The Big Heat*—startle their audience in ways only movies have at their full command. Among recent films *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* has the power of a fluid design carried through the articulations of its separate mosaic images. A young girl preparing for life as a prostitute, listening to the guardian woman who assures her tenderly yet sternly that she will like it, puts on the very best face she can, while somewhere outside men are singing and a drunkenly happy laborer dances a slow jig in the mud. What else is there to do but watch and marvel? We can end with a critical borrowing, unfairly wrenched: *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* is a greater film than *Chloe* as an eagle is more astonishing than a well-behaved truth. □

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Rose Laub Coser

Women's Liberation: The Real Issues

THE NEW CHASTITY AND OTHER ARGUMENTS AGAINST WOMEN'S LIBERATION, by Midge Decter. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan. 188 pp. $5.95.

THE AMERICAN WOMAN, HER CHANGING SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ROLES, 1920–1970, by William H. Chafe. New York: Oxford University Press. 351 pp. $7.95.

If I choose to review Midge Decter's polemic together with William Henry Chafe's history, it is not because they have anything in common with regard to style or scholarship. Rather, it is because the latter clarifies and explains the issues that the first angrily sweeps under the rug. There is no better way of conveying the flavor of Decter's book than to start out in her own manner:

Last year, a woman named Midge Decter (or a Miss Midge Decter)—a journalist, housewife, and mother of four—published a book called *The New Chastity*.[1] The object of her book is to justify her aversion to the feminist movement. The target of her hostility is the whole movement, but she selects as evidence for her case mostly statements by extremists whose fanaticism parallels her own. Just as for some extremists among the feminists all men are exploiters and oppressors, so for Decter all women liberationists are immature and irresponsible. Just as some extremists among the liberationists relish categorical statements about *all* men or *all* of humankind that leave no room for exceptions or ambiguities, so Decter speaks of *the* movement of women's liberation as if it were all of one cloth, as if there were not many kinds of feminists, from those who would destroy "the establishment" to those who demand more equality within it.

Chafe knows better. Like most social movements, he tells us, the new feminism has several constituencies and boasts much division and controversy, even though all its wings share some basic demands: to end discrimination in jobs and education, to repeal abortion laws, and to create child-care centers. Such issues, however, are hardly dealt with by Decter. Although she admits that women are "far from having attained a full parity of opportunity," she drops this issue after all of four and a half lines. Wouldn't the fact that, as Chafe tells us, the median income of working women with college degrees is only 51 percent of that earned by men with a comparable education be enough to arouse indignation? The dismissing manner in which Decter mentions the issue of parity reminds me of a lecture I heard by a famous psychoanalyst many years ago. Addressing a lay audience on the subject of sexual symbolism, he said: "Of course, ladies and gentlemen, I don't deny that the Zeppelin is *also* a means of transportation."

[1] The first sentence of the book reads: "In 1963, a woman named Betty Friedan—a journalist, housewife, and mother of three—published a book called *The Feminine Mystique*. . . ." And again, "a Miss Madeline Belkin described the experience of being secretary. . . ."

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In only one other place in her book does Decter refer to inequalities of opportunities—though again without discussing them. She describes what I am sure she would agree are plain facts:

> First of all, women were often discriminated against. They had difficulty battling their way into certain professional schools, such as medical schools and engineering schools. And having by luck, persistence, or unarguably superior qualification secured the desired training, they were still likely to undergo great difficulty in establishing themselves as qualified practitioners. . . .

Paraphrasing some women liberationists, she goes on to state more undisputable facts: "The overwhelming majority of professional women entered professions that were known as 'the women's professions.' They became, that is, nurses, teachers, social workers, child psychologists, and therapists of all sorts." At this point we might expect some comment; but no, there is none. She merely trivializes the issue by selecting for quotation some poorly reasoned statement by an extremist opponent. But the truly serious way of dealing with the issue would have been to select for discussion some women liberationists of stature, for example, Cynthia Epstein or Alice Rossi.[2] An examination of such writers would have seriously impaired her effort to demonstrate that women liberationists (all of them?) are irresponsible, shying away from the choices and freedoms they already have, whether as housewives, sex partners, wives, or mothers.

There is even in Decter an undertone that suggests the notion of the survival of the fittest. Why should women liberationists complain about the dulling aspects of housework? After all, the modern woman enjoys freedom of choice. "The housewife who weeps with angry exhaustion . . . has chosen to be a housewife. Moreover, she has chosen what sort of housewife to be." But where have we heard such an argument before? Doesn't the worker have the right to change jobs? He is no longer attached to the soil, is he? Those who really have it in them and work hard through the night can make it—if only they want to! Decter repeats this 19th-century argument in regard to late-20th-century women. The problem, she tells us, "turns out to be about . . . the difficulties women are experiencing with the rights and freedoms they already enjoy." As for workers, have they been incited by troublemaking reds? Decter's statement—"it is difficult to say just how large a contingent of lesbians has been exerting influence on and through Women's Liberation. One's impression is that it is quite large"—leaves an unhappy, familiar ring.

DECTER HAS more in common with some of the extreme feminists than a love for categorical statements. Just as in Chafe's words, some "contemporary feminists often [show] an appalling ignorance of history" when they claim that "the 'feminine mystique' is a new post-World-War-II phenomenon," so Decter betrays a lack of historical sense when she notes that the feminists complain about women being pressured into becoming housewives at precisely the time they have more choices than ever before. She should know that social movements never arise at the high point of misery and oppression, but rather at a time when enough advantages have been gained to illuminate the distance that remains to complete freedom and equality. "Revolutions," Chafe remarks, "begin in response to 'rising expectations,' after a group has started on the road to improvement and become aware of its relative deprivation."

Indeed, it is because women today do have more choices and opportunities than extreme feminists are willing to admit that there is widespread discontent. As Chafe notes, "If women had been as oppressed as the feminists claimed, no amount of rhetoric could have aroused them from their captivity." But Decter uses their rhetorical claims of oppression mostly to score polemical points, as when she says that the complaints of women liberationists "make up a kind of grand chorus whose unified melodic theme is that women . . . are simply in no condition to take their rightful place in the world of men." But surely she must know that

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[2] Cynthia Epstein's work, especially her excellent and probing book *Woman's Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), is not quoted once.

Alice Rossi is quoted once, and this from a secondary source! Rossi's writing, from the by now famous "An Immodest Proposal" (*Daedalus*, 1964) to the more recent "Women: Terms of Liberation" (DISSENT, November–December 1970) dealing with women in academia and in science, are readily available.

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social movements proceed according to a logic of their own. Surely she remembers the Marxian slogan that "workers have nothing to lose but their chains" and the Marxian view that "workers are deprived of the essence of humanity," which are hardly attributes, if we follow Decter's logic, that are conducive to make of the working class the "inevitable force of history" that Marx proclaimed would liberate humankind. And even though this class did not, in fact, liberate humanity, the linkage of the seemingly contradictory images of "chained" workers and "inevitable historical force" helped produce a social movement of considerable consequence. At still an earlier time, the Calvinist view of man as so feeble a reed that he cannot claim to even know the design of the creator had the consequence not of making Calvinist believers sink into apathy, but of making them turn their energies to working and striving in this world, thereby contributing to the most rapid advance of an economic system that the world has ever known.

If one wishes really to *understand* a social movement, one must analyze its dynamics, the conditions that give rise to it, clear up the confusions between ideology and reality, and distinguish the rhetoric (the usefulness of which should not be underestimated) from what is socially and historically relevant, if I may be permitted that much abused word. Chafe does this superbly. He builds up the evidence to demonstrate the contradiction between economic practices and social ideals. At a time when more than 70 percent of all women college graduates are in the work force, women are still thought of as a sex generically tied to the home. Decter completely ignores the all-pervasive strength of a value system that dictates that a woman should be in charge of her family (a dictum she seems to agree with). How else could she tell us that women choose freely to be housewives? Her explanation betrays short-sightedness, for she assumes that the contradictory social expectations facing women allow them choices of equal weight. On the one side there is the stress on family commitment; on the other, a stress on the priority of intellectual achievement by professors who "put [women] in the way of rigorous intellectual work." But this does not take account of the crucial fact that there is a general concensus in society about a woman's cultural mandate to fulfill her traditional role (a fact equally ignored by those feminists who make men personally responsible for conditions of inequality). The professors who seemingly offer an alternative choice by making demands on a woman's intellect often expect her not to select a career. Why else can they be heard to say, as some still do, to a woman applicant, "why should a pretty girl like you want to go to graduate school?" And these same professors often deny financial support to a woman because she is a "bad risk," thus strengthening in her the notion that the choice between family commitment and career is a zero-sum game.

Although she devotes a whole chapter to housework, Decter does not deal with the basic factors underlying the problem (neither did the women liberationists whom she attacks). These concern the rewards a woman can expect from the work she does for her family, which are sharply at odds with rewards for other types of work. It is not so much, as Decter admits, that housework fails to be satisfying because it is a job one can never carry through and be finished with. This, after all, is also true for gratifying kinds of work: research, for example, where it often takes years to finish, or a physician's work with patients who won't get or stay better. Just like the women liberationists whom she so ferociously attacks, Decter deals only with the idea of intrinsic satisfactions or the lack of them. The main point, however, is not whether housework is boring or diversified, whether it is grubwork or self-expressive, but that in a society in which achievement is measured by the amount of knowledge, training, and talent it requires, no person, whether man or woman, is likely to get much satisfaction from a type of work that anyone can do. Further, in a society in which achievement is rewarded by pay raises and promotions, it is hard to be satisfied with a type of work that does not yield them. And, most important of all, in a society in which all the goods needed for family living—clothes and frozen foods and cans and pickles and cakes and jams—are produced by industry, there is little incentive for productivity inside the home, what with children preferring hamburgers and canned soups to fancy stews and soups cooked from scratch.

These basic facts—the occupational structure of prestige-grading and the highly de-

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veloped industry for home consumption—make most of the housewife's work anachronistic and obsolete. This Decter does not deal with, nor can she deal with it as long as she uses as her main documentation the excesses of her opponents.

This obsolescence of the housewife stands in sharp contrast to the hitherto unquestioned cultural mandate for the woman to be in charge of family and home. So deeply engrained is this cultural mandate in everybody's mind that even some of the most extreme feminists confirm it in their very protestations. One of them, the former working wife of a graduate student whom Decter quotes to display the liberationists' hatred of men, complains about her former husband: "[He thinks] a couple of screws and the slate is wiped clean. Who needs to pay for servants or buy *his wife* a washing machine when he has a cock?" (emphasis added). Decter uses this as an illustration of the women liberationists' rejection of sexual submission, but she does not ask the obvious question: why should a woman who rebels against matrimony take it for granted that *he* is the one to buy *his wife* a washing machine when *she* is the one who earns the money? Clearly, this young woman is protesting against the man not living up to the traditional expectation that he provide her with household equipment.

This seemingly trivial example sums up the cultural mandate that caring for the family is the woman's task and equipping it that of the man. But more. The man provides not only the economic means, but also status. The woman not only cares for the family, she is given status by the man. It is in this sense, and only in this sense, that marriage could be more important for a woman than for a man—a view Decter proclaims without qualifications and at great length. She does recognize that a woman depends on her husband for status, but only in the context of the advantages a woman derives from marriage, implying that this advantage (of "staking her very self on marriage") demands of her obligations in return. It is women liberationists' rejection of such obligations that Decter calls "irresponsible." What she will not entertain is the idea that one might question the whole societal arrangement that makes a woman dependent on marriage and family in a way a man is not. After all, why should a woman be expected gratefully to receive her status from her husband in a society in which she has been brought up and educated to be able to obtain it for herself?

Women, it seems, do not know how good they have it, do not know that they are getting something for nothing. "Her husband, working by day and demanding the full range of her attentions by night, does not enjoy her costly luxuries of choice. With him career is the only and ultimate medium of self-definition." He has a hard time of it. Not only does Decter make him seem to be a victim of women's expectations because he will "marry . . . because she has asked it of him and he has not dared to refuse," but he has to "produce living, visible, upright evidence of . . . potency," and for him "each incidence of potency in bed [provides] intestinal reassurance of his adequacy to deal with the world outside it." In contrast, a woman "has no further obligation but just to be there and to open herself to the exertion of others."

What Decter apparently means is that a woman does not have to contribute actively to a man's sexual pleasure. Even if Decter were

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right that "the two determinants of pleasure" for a woman "cannot be understood by an analogy in the experience of man," does this mean, as she seems to tell us, that the woman's "pursuit of orgasm is an entirely irrelevant undertaking"? Irrelevant for whom? One wonders what makes her think she can engage in such grandiose generalizations, and where she obtained her evidence.

ONE MAIN CHARACTERISTIC of the book is indeed that Decter does not let her thesis be confused by facts. As a result, her reasoning all too often gives out to make room for the use of the slippery argument from biological nature. Thus, when she speaks of man's fear of getting married, since she cannot explain how she knows this, she says that "for men, this fear seems *natural.*" But should a woman not want to be married, this would be due to "*unnatural* fear or lust for punishment . . ." (emphases added). She says that a girl "almost by *instinct* organizes her relations with members of the opposite sex around the principle of rehearsal for wifehood" (emphasis added). She even uses the term *culture* as if it were a natural force, when she says that a woman has "been appointed by all of culture" to be "the server rather than the served" and that "as a creature of culture woman has been trained to accept the appointment." Recourse to such absolute notions as "nature" and "instinct" is not surprising, since the appeal to deterministic forces is part and parcel of the categorical mode of thinking mentioned earlier, in which the world is seen as white or black and in which variability and relativity are alien concepts.

As a result, Decter cannot deal with any issue that would lead to a contradiction with her main thesis, except through evasiveness. When she briefly and parenthetically admits the lack of parity in regard to opportunities for women, she simply drops the matter, as if it were trivial. And she does the same in regard to women's restricted opportunities in the professions. This evasiveness contrasts sharply with the emphasis with which she vents her indignation at women liberationists.

Evasiveness, as I have shown elsewhere,[3] is a way of dealing with ambivalence. In Decter's case, this ambivalence consists in the contradiction between her liberal values in regard to equality and her conservatism in regard to conjugal relationships. As a professed liberal and a professional herself, Decter cannot come out against economic equality of women, and she does not do so anywhere in the book. However, she cannot examine this issue closely because it would conflict with her conservative view about family life; she would have to confront the question whether true equality of opportunity, both as to earnings and access to positions of prestige, could actually occur without some change in the structure of the American family. But this is precisely what she does not want to face. For she would have to conclude that, under conditions of equality at work, the relations between man and woman in the family can no longer remain the way they are. This is because the man's cultural mandate to be the main provider of economic means and social status for his family rests on the assumption of inequality.[4] To say this is not, as some extreme women liberationists seem to believe, to say that the family has to be destroyed. Rather, arrangements within the family will change if and when women assume an equal place in the economic and professional marketplace. The family has changed before, and, as it survives, can change again.

CHAFE shows that women are not being kept out of the world of work as long as the rewards they earn and the commitments they make do not interfere with their dependent position in the household and their basic duties in the family. But equality of pay would establish the principle of woman's equality with man in the home as well, a notion subversive of the traditional concept of the man as provider. As to the professions and high-status positions, these are associated with prestige in return for commitment. Prestige-seeking, however, is discouraged for women (who wants to be a "career woman"?). And commitment is something women are supposed to owe ex-

[3] "Evasiveness as a Response to Structural Ambivalence," *Social Science and Medicine*, vol. 1, 1967, pp. 203–218.

[4] CF., "The Dysfunctionality of the Husband Provider Role in Industrialized Societies," by Erik Grønseth, paper delivered at the Seventh World Congress of Sociology, 1970.

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clusively or primarily to the family. This accounts for the discrepancy, which Chafe shows so well, between the high participation of women in the labor force and their low participation in the professions. As Chafe reports, the main impetus for women to enter the labor force took place during World War II, when 6 million women took jobs—an increase in the female labor force of 50 percent, raising the female proportion of the labor force from 25 percent in 1940 to 35 percent of all workers in 1950. In eight of ten war-impacted cities surveyed by the Women's Bureau, the number of women workers doubled from 1940 to 1945. In Detroit the female labor force soared from 182,000 to 387,000, while in San Francisco it grew from 138,000 to 275,000. "Women responded to the manpower crisis," writes Chafe, "with an unprecedented display of skill and ingenuity. The beautician who overnight became a switchwoman for 600 L.I. R.R. trains represented but one example. . . . An Austrian aristocrat and designer of perfume bottles took a job as a precision toolmaker. . . . A former cosmetics salesgirl . . . operated a 1,700-ton keel binder. In Gary, Indiana, women maneuvered giant overhead traveling cranes and cleaned out blast furnaces. Elsewhere, women ran lathes, cut dies, read blueprints, and serviced airplanes. They maintained road-beds, greased locomotives, and took the place of lumberjacks in toppling giant redwoods." They worked as stevedores, blacksmiths, foundry helpers, and drill-press operators.

Nevertheless, women continued to receive less pay than men. In one Eastern war plant, male trainees received a higher wage than the women training them. At a Fort Wayne, Indiana, General Electric Plant, where "many of the jobs required comparable skill and training, . . . only the women in the highest female grouping received as much as the men in the lowest male category. In 1945 as in 1940, women earned only 65 percent of what men received," and we know that the situation isn't better in 1970.

As soon as the war ended, women's contributions were forgotten. The popular magazines, which had contained laudatory articles on women's war contributions (one issue of *Life* featured a pigtailed pilot on its cover) now "were full of articles that revived shibboleths about women's inferiority and questioned the ability of females to compete with men." Still, women did not stay away from work after the war. The pace of female employment quickened in the '50s, so that in 1960 twice as many women were at work as in 1940. Most strikingly, economic activities were not limited to the poor or the single. By 1970, the labor force contained 60 percent of all wives from homes with an annual income of more than $10,000. The most striking feature of the '50s was the degree to which women continued to enter the job market and to expand their sphere.

At present, most female college graduates are employed; yet, the proportion of women in business and the professions has hardly changed at all. "Women workers sought jobs, not careers," and "every aspect of female employment seemed designed to mute the suggestion that traditional modes of female behavior were under attack." Economic practices and social ideals were at odds. "Most citizens preferred to retain traditional definitions of masculine and feminine spheres in practice. . . . A married woman was not thought of as an equal in the labor force. . . ."

Women defined their work as a contribution to the well-being of the family and as such it was accepted as an extension of woman's traditional commitment, without challenging the man's role as provider and the woman's role as carer for the family.

Yet, women's participation in the labor force has become so massive that the ideology that insists the woman's place is in the home could not survive unscarred. All the surveys show that in families where the wife works, the husband takes part to some extent in activities that traditionally were labeled the woman's realm, and the wife takes part in decisions that heretofore were considered the realm of the husband.

De-differentiation of roles in the family has developed to some extent for the last 20 years or so. Enough of a de facto change has taken place in woman's role to weaken the traditional myth and to bring into awareness the contradiction between the reality of woman's economic role and the ideology of her place in the home. This has been a significant spur to the rise of the women's liberation movement.

William Chafe's book cannot be done justice in this review. To do so, one should have to convey how he combines the rigorous scholarship of the historian with sociological sensitivity

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and superb writing. One should have to review how he deals with the ups and downs of the feminist movements over half a century, and with the ambiguities and contradictions within that movement, and how these relate to the changes in the status of women in the world of work. The book must be read not only for the information it presents, but as a model of how to combine ideological sophistication with objective writing.

As to Midge Decter, her book provides an instructive example of how ideological rigidity can blind a brilliant writer so that she becomes incapable of dealing with facts that less capable minds would have no trouble recognizing. □

Gerald Graff

On Culture and Society

SINCERITY AND AUTHENTICITY, by Lionel Trilling. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 199 pp. $7.95.

The comedian Lenny Bruce occasionally used to open nightclub performances by stating his intention to piss on the audience. "I'm going to piss on you," he would announce. This being greeted usually by much laughter and applause, Bruce would then say:

> Always so much *acceptance,* you see that? I can't take the bit out. . . . I just started it as a gag once, you know? And they just said, hooray, hooray, hooray! But just let me do a few *talk* bits. No! Piss on us first, then you'll do the rest of it.

What Lenny Bruce caught in his unique idiom has become the object of increased analysis in the last decade or so—the assimilation, or at least benign toleration, by a large segment of the middle class, of cultural attitudes originally designed to affront it. In *Beyond Culture,* Lionel Trilling termed this phenomenon "the legitimization of the subversive," specifically referring to the postwar social and academic respectability of the literature of the avant-garde "adversary culture." Trilling's important new book returns to this topic in the course of a critical assessment of the history and fate of the concept of *authenticity* in modern culture.

Trilling believes that since the collapse of the traditional social order and its unified world view around the close of the 18th century, *sincerity* has progressively given way to *authenticity* as the dominant ideal of moral consciousness. The earlier ideal of sincerity, which arose in the Renaissance as a result of an unprecedented awareness of the deviousness of public life, did not entail a repudiation of public and social experience as such. Rousseau's "honest soul," which was counterposed against the corruption and hypocrisy of established society, presupposed its own social ideal; moreover this sincerity harmonized with certain simple, unified moral norms acknowledged by the generality of mankind. The new "authentic" social type, by contrast, is "characterized by its departure from singleness and simplicity, by the negation of self through role-playing, by commitment to an artistic culture and what this entails of alienation from the traditional ethos." Authenticity presents itself as prior to or "beyond" the fixed good and evil that underwrite the ethics of sincerity, viewing these norms as deceitful abstractions superimposed upon the contingency and open-endedness of experience. Trilling cites Diderot's Rameau's nephew, of whom Diderot as a "sincere" moralist explicitly disapproves, as an early example of an authentic character type. Appropriately, it is the nephew's character upon which Hegel draws in the *Phenomenology of Mind* in order to illustrate his notion of the "disintegrated consciousness." For Hegel, this multiple consciousness represents a progressive advance of Spirit in its evolution toward ever greater consciousness of itself.

In this, Hegel anticipated the strategy of numerous modernist writers (Wilde, Yeats, Gide, Sartre) of assuming successive "masks" in quest of an authenticity superior to that of the predefined and predetermined self-concep-

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tions of bourgeois society. At the same time, the recognition of the ubiquity of masks in human experience has generated a literature of "unmasking" which undertakes profound explorations into the "heart of darkness" concealed by moral and social convention. There are a number of paradoxes here. The modernist concern with authenticity is highly ambivalent, for the discovery of the fragility and "weightlessness" of the self is both liberating and terrifying. Indeed, the inner logic of the doctrine of authenticity seems to foreclose the possibility of actually arriving at an authentic state of being, since any state of arrival would be static and thus by definition inauthentic.

Trilling suggests that the awareness of the protean nature of consciousness, entertained with ambivalence by the earlier modernist writers, has today reached an extreme phase, expressing itself in an unqualified negation of all "limiting conditions" on the self. One consequence of this is seen in the crafts of fiction and historical writing, where the theory of the radical open-endedness of experience has diminished the prestige of narrative form and storytelling. Another is found in the psychological and social theories of Norman O. Brown, Herbert Marcuse, R. D. Laing, and David Cooper, where the dissolution of the strongly individuated ego is often equated with personal and social liberation. Certain passages in the writings of Laing and Cooper go so far as to endow schizophrenia and madness with the authority of visionary revelation. Despite the revolutionary aspirations that have accompanied the drive to free the self from all boundaries and limits, Trilling finds a kind of despair beneath it all, a feeling that life is not "susceptible of comprehension and management." The utopian fantasy of transcending the reality principle betrays an inability to come to terms with any possible reality.

Trilling's distinction between authentic and sincere character models might be further illuminated by aligning it with Jacob Brackman's distinction, in his book, *The Put-On,* between the "put-on" and the old-fashioned practice of "kidding."

> The object of kidding, . . . [Brackman writes] is always manifest: to *pass off* untruth as truth just for the fun of it. . . . At first, the victim believes the false to be true, whereas the kidder knows the truth. Then, the gulling accom-

The VICTORS and the VANQUISHED

by Heda Kovály and Erazim Kohák

This moving book is the result of the experience of dialogue in which foes discover their common humanity.

One of the authors, Heda Kovály, a survivor of Auschwitz, was the wife of Rudolf Margolius, a dedicated young Communist whom the Czechoslovak Communist Party placed in a high government position only to execute him as a conspirator, and finally a decade later to declare him innocent. Even more than the Moscow trials of the 'thirties, the infamous event known to history as the Slánský trial, staged in 1952, marks a turning point in the story of revolution.

Heda Kovály tells the firsthand story of the holocaust which prefaced the ground for the revolution, of its day-by-day ferment, and its triumph. She describes it from within, as one of the victors who were soon to become the revolution's intimate victims, as well as her experience of the great rebirth which culminated in the brief Spring of Freedom in 1968 and the searing aftermath of Soviet occupation.

The other author, Erazim Kohák, is the noted Czechoslovak social philosopher first exiled after the Communist Coup in 1948 and for the second time after the Soviet occupation in 1969. He speaks of the same events from the perspective of the vanquished, the idealistic democrats who sought not to seize power but to humanize it.

Mr. Kohák's description of the events from 1938 to the present are masterly as history, clarifying as interpretation. From Hitler's unleashing of fury on the Czech people to the role of the Communists in the resistance; the leadership of Dubček; the power of the Soviet thrust in 1968 "with a force greater than that which the Americans deployed in Vietnam," down to the present, the entire epoch comes clear to us in depth. Mr. Kohák's achievement is of transcendent value.

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plished, the kidder lets the victim know he's been taken for a ride.

The put-on, by contrast, "is an *open-end* form. That is to say, it is rarely climaxed by having the 'truth' set straight—when a truth, indeed, exists." With the put-on the distinction between truth and untruth is obscured, and the "real" identity and intention of the perpetrator remain ambiguous, even to the perpetrator himself. Like innumerable contemporary artists, the adept of the put-on disclaims responsibility for or interest in the interpretation of his meaning.

Though Trilling does not mention this one specifically, fads like the put-on might be adduced as evidence of his contention that the once-subversive tradition of authenticity has been domesticated and trivialized by its recent popularity. "The concerted effort of a culture or of a segment of a culture to achieve authenticity," he writes, "generates its own conventions, its generalities, its commonplaces, its maxims, what Sartre, taking the word from Heidegger, calls the 'gabble.' " What began in an effort to subvert gabble has become gabble in its turn. This rigidification, Trilling suggests, is an aspect of "developments in the ecology of art" such as "the unprecedented proliferation of art, the ease with which formerly esoteric or repellent art forms are accepted, the fascinating conjunction of popular and commercial art with what used to be called advanced art." These developments have lessened the artist's "adversary relation to the dominant culture," with a corresponding lessening of intellectual individuality.

AGAINST THE DIZZINESS of the new authenticity, Trilling counterposes a rival concept of authenticity, best exemplified for him by the Freud of *Civilization and its Discontents*. A commitment to Freud's "classic tragic realism," as Trilling once called it, has served him before as a point of moral reference for measuring some of the more self-indulgent tendencies of the age. In an essay first published in 1941 (and reprinted in *The Liberal Imagination*, 1950), Trilling asserts that "the Freudian man is, I venture to think, a creature of far more dignity and interest than the man which any other modern system has been able to conceive." In *Beyond Culture* (1968), Trilling interprets Freud's "emphasis on biology" as a "liberating idea" because of its implication that "there is a residue of human quality beyond the reach of cultural control." Like Paul Goodman, Trilling has fought a continuous battle against the assumption of liberal, technological society that, as Goodman phrased it, "the essence of 'human nature' is to be pretty infinitely malleable" and thus subject to unlimited manipulation and control.

Trilling's endorsement of the Freudian view against the new vogue of the protean self thus parallels the strategy of his earlier critiques of liberalism:

> The fabric of contradictions that Freud conceives human existence to be is recalcitrant to preference, to will, to reason; it is not to be lightly manipulated. His imagination of the human condition preserves something—much—of the stratum of hardness that runs through the Jewish and Christian traditions as they respond to the hardness of human destiny.

Trilling here sees Freud as reinstating "the tragic element of Judaism and Christianity" in an age which has lost the objective moral authority which gave solidity to those systems. In "the fabric of contradictions" that he saw as limiting the human fate Freud, according to Trilling, located a kind of substitute for this authority, an "authenticating imperative," that is, something to be authentic in relation *to*. This imperative anchors and affirms "the authenticity of him to whom the fate is assigned." Though somber in its implications, Freud's view attributes to life a certain stability which lends scope to human operations. Precisely by understanding the limits of man's ability to transform himself, this view delimits an area in which intelligent direction can be effective.

Furthermore, the fact that man is incurably divided against himself and his culture provides a context of *resistance* which makes individual self-definition possible. It is just this resistance, "the hardness of human destiny," which is eroded—or concealed—by a bureaucratic, technological society that has become "affluent, permissive, and pleasure-oriented" and thus able to create the illusion that all the ancient obstacles to human happiness are about to be overcome. A line of American critics, from the early Van Wyck Brooks to Richard Chase, John W. Aldridge, and Alfred Kazin, has shared Trilling's conviction that sharply individuated character type needs a dialectic within which to operate, that it tends to disappear in a fluid,

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incoherent, and faceless society. Such a dialectical perspective is found in much of the social criticism of the 1950s expressing the reaction against "other-directedness" and conformity. Trilling's effective restatement of this line of criticism demonstrates that it is far from obsolete.

Yet, Trilling speaks almost as if he considers himself the last survivor of this tradition, rarely missing an opportunity to describe his own views as "archaic" or "anachronistic." This despairing and apologetic self-dramatization makes a greater concession than seems necessary to the naive apocalypticism which he attacks. After all, if there *are* permanent human imperatives, as Trilling thinks, then something in the spirit must eventually rebel when these imperatives are repeatedly denied.

And I think something in the spirit must indeed rebel at writing like the following, which comes conveniently to hand from the November issue of the *Saturday Review of the Arts*. In an essay entitled "New Heaven and Earth," Joyce Carol Oates writes:

> We have come to the end of, we are satiated with, the "objective," valueless philosophies that have always worked to preserve a status quo, however archaic. We are tired of the old dichotomies: Sane/Insane, Normal/Sick, Black/White, Man/Nature, Victor/Vanquished, and—above all this Cartesian dualism I/It. . . . They are no longer useful or pragmatic, They are no longer *true*.

That is to say, they are no longer authentic. Note here the implication that what "we are tired of" need not count as true or real, that the criterion of the truth of a proposition is now to be its capacity to interest or give pleasure. This is the new voice of authority: the Western purposive ego is dead; * distinctions between subject and object, reality and illusion, etc., have been abolished, the "self" is now (or is shortly to be) a fluid and unconditioned fiction that is free to improvise infinite avatars of itself and its mythoplastic "reality," and both the self and reality are no more than a kind of undifferentiated oatmeal that can be kneaded and manipulated into the shape desired at each transitory moment. Here the ideas of open-endedness and authenticity have merged with the slogans of affluent-society optimism.

INSOFAR as the contemporary avant-garde has persisted in this kind of thinking, it has tended to lose its adversary thrust, a development that Trilling, as we have seen, ascribes to changes in "the ecology of art." But what brought about these changes? With respect to this question Trilling forces us to make what we can out of a few suggestive hints, hints that unfortunately are not developed into any general hypothesis. Although the book aims to be suggestive rather than definitive, this failure to treat the causes of the tendencies it attacks is its most serious limitation. As an approach to such a diagnosis, I would suggest the following.

There has taken place in the present century a cultural transformation of the bourgeoisie itself, which has deprived the adversary culture of the resistance that once stimulated its creative self-definition. The bourgeois "establishment," cut off from its 19th-century traditions, has ceased to hold firm religious, moral, and intellectual convictions; therefore, nothing much prevents it from co-opting "radical" cultural styles for the uses of the media and the marketplace (especially since such cultural permissiveness requires no redress of material and social inequalities). Furthermore, as capitalist, technological society becomes more meaningless and impersonal and outlets for social boredom become more necessary, there arises an increased taste for psychological experimentalism—e.g., "immediate experience," "exploration of inner space," encounter-group psychology, etc. This psychological experimentalism, which the adversary culture had initiated as a form of discipline, becomes mediated and trivialized by the machinery of consumerism and publicity. Open-endedness loses its radical, liberating force in a social context that not only is itself bewilderingly open-ended and without fixed reference-points but which turns such metaphors into media clichés.

As bourgeois opposition has softened, the

* George Orwell's remarks on the "proletarian cant" of the '30s are pertinent once more: "Everyone knows, or ought to know by this time, how it runs: the bourgeoisie are 'dead' (a favorite word of abuse nowadays and very effective because meaningless), bourgeois culture is bankrupt, bourgeois 'values' are despicable, and so on and so forth. . . ." [*The Road to Wigan Pier*, 1937]. It seems that at one time intellectuals tried to discredit an opponent by demonstrating he was *wrong*. Now one simply dismisses him as *dead*—a gesture that requires less effort, is unanswerable, and tends to suggest that one is oneself vibrantly and excitingly alive.

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pressure of the adversary culture's resistance to co-optation has simultaneously lowered. This culture's inveterate suspicion of theory and programmatic principles—a corollary of the doctrine of authenticity—has been the source of its traditional immunity to exploitation by ideological interests. Yet its very elasticity and resistance to static formulations makes the adversary culture not only highly unstable as a force of opposition but vulnerable to another type of exploitation—subservience to a dynamic but incoherent and superficial mass society. The history of such movements as Futurism suggests the area of latent agreement which has always existed between certain avant-gardes and technological society—e.g., the taste for perpetual innovation, the exaltation of technique over ends, the hostility to tradition—and such agreement enhances the likelihood of co-optation. Last, the logic of perpetual transcendence tends to subvert the very concept of an *adversary* culture, requiring the liquidation of "reactionary" or "élitist" dualisms which oppose intellectuals to society.

As a result of these developments we have a rapprochement today between avant-garde intellectuals and mass society that promises to reestablish in the cultural sphere a complacency comparable to what was witnessed in the American '50s. Paradoxically, this new complacency comes about through what profess to be radical auspices. The new accommodation between high and mass culture is alleged to represent a cultural revolution of liberating proportions, "the end of alienation." But what is being claimed as the end of alienation might more accurately be described as its democratization. The condition in which large numbers of people are forced to relieve a diminishing sense of selfhood by experimenting with the psyche is not a matter to be derided; but it will scarcely be improved by pretending it is a sign of vitality. The pretense that mass alienation is liberation, like the pretense that schizophrenia is health, testifies to the depth of the longing in our day to construe the symptoms of cultural pathos as the signs of a cultural revolution. As Trilling observes, it is "significant of our circumstance that many among us find it gratifying to entertain the thought that alienation is to be overcome only by the completeness of alienation, and that alienation completed is not a deprivation or deficiency but a potency."

Such statements will appear retrograde to some intellectuals, who interpret a lack of sympathy with the outlook of the New Sensibility as a symptom of a "new cultural conservatism," which presumably carries over into politics. But "conservatism" has become an almost meaningless term in the arts today when constant innovation for its own sake and total rejection of the past have become routinely expected norms of "advanced art," and when the mere belief that a work of art should have some meaning is sufficient in many quarters to convict one of being "conservative." Furthermore, the alleged connection between conservatism in the arts and conservatism in politics is an unexamined assumption—as is the notion that the destruction of the reality principle and the spread of undifferentiated forms of consciousness represent steps in the direction of social equality and freedom. On the contrary, the abandonment of critical thinking to a politics of ecstatic consciousness clears the way for further acquiescence to existing forms of social control.* As Trilling says, à propos of certain contradictions in Marcuse's writing, the "political implications of reduced individuality" are far from promising. Marcuse defines revolutionary consciousness in terms of the polymorphous self. But he cannot help recognizing that such an unfocused self is likely to be more easily manipulated—the final irony of the revolt he encourages against "limiting conditions"—and "that moral intransigence and political activism are brought into being by renunciation and sublimation," i.e., that radicalism depends on the survival of critical intelligence. The abolition of distinctions between reality and myth, sanity and insanity, would appear to be coming at just the right moment for governments whose policies depend upon keeping citizens from making such distinctions. □

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* The May 1972 issue of *Psychology Today* features an article by Kenneth J. Gergen entitled "Multiple Identity." Its thesis is that "the healthy, happy human being wears many masks . . . multiple identity is real, right and good." A complex, rapidly changing society, says the author, renders the traditional, unified self obsolete. "We are made of soft plastic," he says, "and molded by social circumstances." No clearer illustration could be found of the compatibility of the "radical" psychology of protean man with the requirements of social "adjustment."

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Robert W. Greene

Unmeltable Ethnics

THE RISE OF THE UNMELTABLE ETHNICS, by Michael Novak. New York: Macmillan. 321 pp. $7.95.

Of the half-dozen studies of white ethnicity in America that have appeared during the past couple of years, Michael Novak's *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* is probably the most valuable—and the most abrasive. It has something to irritate if not offend almost every reader, but at the same time it contains a number of hard truths about monumental injustices and equally monumental resentments that are abroad in our land. As such, it illuminates dilemmas that are going to have to be resolved if America is to survive the various polarizations that are currently threatening to tear it apart.

The primary strength of Novak's book is that it brilliantly articulates the pain and frustration of those Americans who constitute perhaps our least visible minority, the descendants of non-Jewish immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe: Poles, Italians, Greeks, and Slavs. Already in a preface Novak elects to adopt Geno Baroni's acronym for this group, PIGS, and this initial choice sets the tone for the entire book, a tone that is on the whole elegantly polemical, while occasionally acerbic and even nasty. However, Novak's decision to focus his study on the ethnic groups represented by Monsignor Baroni's catchy acronym, if in some respects justifiable, in the end has saddled his book with an orientation that seems to foreshorten its potential reach. For while his PIGS perspective allows him to zero in on our most ignored and least "meltable" (i.e., least nordic-Protestant) white ethnics, it also keeps him from addressing himself directly to something he clearly wanted very much to study: the American Catholic community as an enormously varied but ultimately cohesive subculture, and the relationship of that community to the majority culture. By excluding the Catholic Irish and including the non-Catholic Greeks, Novak limited in advance his special gift for intelligent generalization about ethnic Catholic America. I shall return to this crucial point later.

One of Novak's principal theses is that the nonnativist American does violence to his psyche and his sense of himself when he struggles to blend with the majority culture or the "superculture," to use Novak's preferred term. This thesis is of course not new, but Novak's version of it is especially compelling because it is couched not in jargon but in the heart-felt language of the diary or notebook; it comes from inside the experience rather than from outside the problem. Also, his fervor is balanced most of the time by intellectual rigor and erudition.

THE TENSION between Novak's passion on the one hand and his sophistication on the other is mirrored in his ambivalent attitude toward being an ethnic American: "Growing up in America has been an assault upon my sense of worthiness. It has also been a kind of liberation and delight."

As a second-generation Irish American, I wonder whether a nativist American can really appreciate how beautifully these two seemingly contradictory sentences sum up the very mixed feelings an ethnic American can have regarding his lot, especially an ethnic American who has "made it" in terms of upper-middle-class standards of success. Not that the ideas and feelings Novak is expressing here would overtax the nativist imagination, but till now most Americans, including intellectuals, haven't been accustomed to thinking about upward mobility in purely subjective terms, or to measuring its worth against a personal set of values. As a rule, ethnics haven't been encouraged to let themselves reflect upon or to discuss with others how they *feel* about forsaking one class (working or lower-middle) for another (upper-middle). Yet as soon as an ethnic does start thinking or talking honestly about these matters, he realizes that his private reaction to his public success, to his attaining suburban-professional-upper-middle-class status, is an intense and confused mass of negative and positive feelings, succinctly conveyed in Novak's sentences.

Along with Novak, the "successful" ethnic feels unworthy because he has come to accept the superculture's caste and class system and accompanying moral imperative: rise and as-

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similate. He hates his origins because they represent so many unsought burdens, so many stigmata of his lowly station at birth. But then he feels guilty about hating his origins because it is disloyal and ungrateful to do so. Origins are after all people and places and things and customs and words and habits and values, not all of which he really wants to discard or forget about. Eventually he comes to resent the society which presses him to cut all ties with his past. He senses that the very system which holds out the promise of affluence and belonging would have him utterly devalue his earliest formative experiences. He realizes that the price of rising and assimilating is high, that its basic command is, Deny your background and smooth out all the rough (read "ethnic," "lower-class," "non-Protestant") edges. In short, Die to one life so as to be born again to another. (The sacramental overtones of the melting pot ideal, he ultimately discovers, are all-pervasive.)

But that's just Novak's first sentence resonating, just the rage hissing through clenched teeth. His second sentence tells another story or, more precisely, shows the other side of the coin. It speaks of liberation and delight, not of assaults on anyone's sense of worthiness. Are the two sentences contradictory? Certainly not to a white ethnic who has experienced the pleasure *and* the pain of leaving his milieu of origin.

Being raised in an unaffluent, poorly educated, and nonachievement-oriented household and neighborhood (still the rule rather than the exception for most working- and lower-middle-class ethnic Catholic youngsters) can completely stifle whatever potential for growth and development a child may have. There are no pressures like the pressures to conform to the norm of lower-class expectations, expectations that are usually pegged pretty low as regards both occupational and personal aspirations. For the lower-class ethnic Catholic, education is generally assumed to be vocational. To escape such a milieu can thus be a delightful and liberating experience, and one liable to produce feelings of great joy, even gratitude to the system that permitted the escape. Novak is evidently aware, even if he scarcely emphasizes it in his book, that his very ability to articulate the pain and frustration of his fellow PIGS correlates highly with the distance that he has traveled from his lower-class, Slovak, Catholic origins. Small wonder, then, that his discourse abruptly shifts down at times into bitter accusation (e.g., his chapter entitled "Confessions of a White Ethnic") and up at other times to the level of exalted prophecy, especially in his final two chapters called "The New Ethnic Politics."

Novak also makes the important point that while white ethnics are essentially "network" people who are plugged into extended family and neighborhood relationships, the dominant culture prizes individuality and views each person as somehow detached from his immediate social setting. The ethnic's deep roots in familial and local "turf" are thus threatened by the nativist's regard for highly mobile, interchangeable human units. Many ethnics, Novak among them, believe that their strong family feeling and tribal sense are infinitely healthier in the long run for both themselves and the larger society than is the nativist's "pursuit of loneliness." Along with Andrew Greeley in *Why Can't They Be Like Us?* (New York: Dutton, 1971), Novak sees the melting pot ideal as having fostered not self-determination but an atomization of people. Instead of cooperation among rugged loners, the American reality has been something else altogether, as ethnics have always known and as Novak's chapter entitled "The Nordic Jungle: Inferiority in America" shows with chilling eloquence. For Novak and other ethnics, America produces "lonely crowds," masses of rootless people ever on the move, competing mercilessly with one another and at the same time assiduously avoiding contact with one another. This nonnativist perception of America, even if it borders on caricature, rings true enough to be profoundly disturbing.

AS VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING I have said thus far indicates, it is my opinion that Novak's book constitutes a powerful and convincing brief on behalf of ethnic Americans and their legitimate grievances. But as I have also suggested, it seems to me that Novak made a serious mistake when he took as the scope of his study the groups represented by Geno Baroni's acronym PIGS (Poles, Italians, Greeks, Slavs). What specifically strikes me as wrong-headed is that he almost excludes the Irish and includes the Greeks—and I don't think that I am merely reacting as a slighted Irish American when I say this. Novak has about as much difficulty

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not bringing up the Irish as he has talking about the Greeks. His sporadic remarks about the Irish reveal both a fascination with them and ambivalent if mostly hostile feelings toward them. In that sense his book is a perfect illustration of the unexamined interethnic tensions within Catholic America he only alludes to briefly.

Of course the Irish have too often been condescending and even abusive in their behavior toward other Catholic groups in America, and naturally this behavior has been resented. Of course the Irish have functioned as self-appointed spokesmen for Catholic America and have played the "house" Catholic to the "field" Catholic of Poles, Italians, etc., for the benefit of "massa" WASP. And of course the Irish have monopolized leadership positions not only in the Church, but also in politics, unions, and police and fire departments, frequently at the expense of other Catholics. But none of that in any way diminishes the indisputable fact that in religion, in relationship to the Old Country, and in actual or residual class self-concept, most if not all ethnic Catholic groups in America, including the Irish, have more in common with one another than any of them has in common with most Eastern Orthodox groups.

Ethnocentrism in America, for example, has traditionally been more marked among Eastern Orthodox groups such as Greeks, Syrians, and Armenians, than it has been among Irish, Italians, or Poles, the three largest Roman Catholic groups in America. Greeks outside Greece, Syrians outside Syria, and Armenians outside Armenia tend to see themselves as dwelling in a kind of diaspora, as still connected somehow to the Old Country, while Polish America, Irish America, and Italian America exhibit a significant degree of autonomy, exist as social entities no longer directly dependent upon the Old Country, though to be sure not yet totally merged with the New. Greeks, Syrians, and Armenians have gravitated generally to entrepreneurial positions, moving into the managerial, professional, and owner classes more rapidly than have Poles, Italians, or even the Irish. In other words, and this is crucial, they have never belonged *as groups* to the American working class, as the Irish, Italians, and Poles have. A final, major difference between Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Americans: in part, no doubt because of the relatively few doctrinal differences separating Episcopalianism from Eastern Orthodoxy, a Greek in America may turn Protestant, thereby joining the religion of the majority culture, sooner than, say, a Pole. Spiro Agnew and Edmund Muskie illustrate this perfectly.

Novak's exclusion of the Irish and his inclusion of the Greeks imposes harmful constraints upon his book. It prevents him from examining in depth a subject that obviously fascinates him: American Catholicism as a kind of uneasy alliance among certain white ethnic groups who, despite their differences, constitute a single subculture that is almost as distinct from Eastern Orthodox America as it is from nativist America. Novak's study contains numerous intriguing comparisons of the Catholic versus the Protestant temper and mentality. It would be good to have his extended reflections on interethnic rivalry within American Catholicism. And he would surely be enlightening if he were to elaborate upon his single perceptive sentence (on p. 55) contrasting the French of Louisiana (Cajuns) with those of New England (French Canadians).

I also have reservations about Novak's conservative stance, his prejudice in favor of the past, an aspect of his book that has been brilliantly analyzed by Robert Alter in the June 1972 *Commentary*. I was particularly disappointed by the book's concluding section entitled "The New Ethnic Politics." It is here especially that Novak's deeply felt need to respond to Kevin Phillips's *The Emerging Republican Majority* comes to the fore. Novak wants to see an ethnic Democratic party, not the ethnic Republican party of Phillips. I concur in Novak's wishes, but wishing won't make it so, and the Democratic Convention in Miami last July provided little evidence that the McGovern wing (which for other reasons I personally supported) cared much about the plight and sensitivities of white ethnics.

The method that Novak implicitly advocates for achieving an ethnic Democratic party amounts to a return to the old, small, densely textured ways of family and neighborhood, essentially to a bygone ethnicity, as the source of secure identities and all things good. Novak foresees a coalition within the Democratic party of confident, assertive, and yet cooperating and mutually respectful ethnic groups. He envisions

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ethnic groups that will be not just interest groups but cultural groups as well, bearers of unique and unprocessed traditions, alternative modes of living to the hyperrationalized lifestyle of the superculture.

What I object to in this final section is its visionary, almost utopian tone and substance. Up to this point Novak's approach is down-to-earth and concrete, even if given to an occasional facile generalization. By comparison, the new introduction to Nathan Glazer's and Daniel P. Moynihan's revised edition of *Beyond the Melting Pot* (M.I.T. Press, 1970) offers far more useful suggestions for constructing our future as a richly pluralistic instead of a distressingly fragmented society. Dreams of recapturing the supportive intimacy of the old ethnic ways, while cozy to linger in, will never inspire the actions required to transform them into realities. And such dreaming tends to gloss over the paralyzing constrictions of the old ethnic ways.

OUR NEED at this juncture, it seems to me, is to live through our present malaise and to build a more harmonious and worthwhile future by setting straight the record of our various, double-edged pasts. We must really study, not half-invent, our separate and our shared histories, in the Old Country and in the New. We must get to know ourselves as wholly as possible in order to accept both the good and the bad in us, perhaps for the first time. Only then can ethnics hope to show others what they have long suspected, that cultural differentiation in America is not a liability, not something to be fantasized away with imaginings of melting pots.

America is a pluralistic society in spite of itself. To this day the main imperative confronting the new arrival is that he must at once set about the task of assimilating to the majority culture. The melting-pot ideal, while more and more questioned these days, especially by minorities, is yet to be dislodged from its preeminent position in the minds of most Americans. There is great cultural variety in our midst, which we manage to tolerate but which we don't treasure. Michael Novak's book, whatever its shortcomings, demonstrates and embodies this basic truth in unforgettable fashion. □

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In the Magazines

"The Intellectual as Critic and Rebel," by Seymour Martin Lipset and Richard B. Dobson. DAEDALUS, Summer 1972.

In a *Daedalus* forum on "Intellectuals and Change," Seymour Martin Lipset and Richard B. Dobson argue that the "historical and traditional" stance of alienation of both the American and Russian intelligentsia, resulting from "features inherent in the role and social organization of intellectual life," threatens to undermine the capacity of postindustrial American and Soviet society to maintain a social equilibrium.

The authors find the adversary role of intellectuals to be pervasive in the history of both the United States and Russia. In America, they find both that the intellectuals have been traditionally "on the progressive, liberal or leftist side," and that no other stratum has even approached them in their support of leftist activities. Similarly, 19th-century Russian nihilists and populists founded a tradition of Russian intellectual dissidence. Surviving the "surrender of the intellectuals under Stalin, the tradition is now embodied in a "conscious, amorphously organized group of intellectuals who dare to speak their mind in independent activity."

Lipset and Dobson, following Robert Merton, attribute the adversary role to the "normative pattern" of intellectual work, which demands a "suspension of judgment until the facts are at hand" and a "detached scrutiny of beliefs in terms of empirical and logical criteria." Thus it is not deprivation or repression that is primarily responsibile for the impulse to react critically, but concern for creativity and originality. Indeed, it is those "who rank high on indicators of academic status [which] are among the most left-inclined professors." The authors conclude that the stability of postindustrial societies is threatened by the intelligentsia, because such societies are increasingly dependent on it. "The growing significance of science and other branches of knowledge, in a society in which theoretical knowledge is the principal source of economic change, has led to a major increase in the status and prestige of the intelligentsia." Given the tendency for intellectuals to rebel, the result for both America and Russia could be a crisis within the elite itself.

Lipset's and Dobson's argument is of great interest, for it gives broad meaning to the recent currents of dissidence among intellectuals both in Russia and the West. However, the argument is flawed.

In the first place, the historical presentation is inaccurate. Intellectuals have not always opposed the status quo; indeed, at times they have been among its staunchest defenders. As Jill Conway points out in the same issue of *Daedalus,* American social scientists in the Gilded Age, under the influence of social Darwinism, developed a powerful justification for America's developing industrial society. Similarly, in Bismarckian Germany intellectuals defended the authoritarian Prussian state with a powerful religious and nationalistic ideology. Lipset and Dobson themselves admit that the Soviet intelligentsia played a major role in consolidating the Russian Revolution under Stalin.

Since the political role of the intelligentsia has not been consistent throughout history, it cannot be true that it is inherent in the

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nature of the intelligentsia to challenge the conventional verities. Indeed, one wonders whether it is true that scholars apply their "detached scrutiny of beliefs in terms of empirical and logical criteria" to the social and political world, as Lipset and Dobson suggest. It is arguable that contrary to Lipset and Dobson, intellectuals tend to be rebellious when they find themselves excluded from political power, and tend to defend the status quo when they are influential.

Finally, the assumption that the influence of the intelligentsia in postindustrial society is increasing also seems questionable. For while knowledge becomes increasingly important, the increasingly specialized bearers of that knowledge may be losing their independence and consequently their influence. If so, the political and economic elites continue to dominate postindustrial society, with knowledge-producers cast in a subordinate if comfortable role. But this too is not inevitable, no more than politics, choice, will, decision. □

"The Secret Way the Rich Escape," by Philip M. Stern. WASHINGTON MONTHLY, January 1973.

Philip Stern, one of America's leading tax experts, argues that the Internal Revenue Service has become an agent of the corporations it is supposed to tax in the public interest, and that the IRS performs valuable services for private industry.

The IRS gives advance-of-the-fact rulings, after private hearings, to corporations contemplating new investment, which ensure that corporations—but not the public—know how alternative investment procedures will be taxed. It usually interprets tax law in favor of corporations, and its interpretations have the force of law. In 1964 the IRS ruled that

> treble-damage payments by antitrust violators were "ordinary and necessary" business expenses, and therefore tax deductible. This made it just half as expensive to be caught violating the antimonopoly laws. To put it another way, the IRS ruling effectively amended the antitrust laws and cut the damage payments in half. . . . As of 1971, it was estimated that this one ruling had cost the American taxpayers $400 million, the electronic companies alone saving about $250 million.

Another example was the IRS's in-advance-of-the-fact ruling in 1966 on Continental Oil's purchase of Consolidated Coal, the largest coal company in the United States. IRS ruled, in a precedent-making decision, that a loan taken by an oil company to buy a coal company be paid back with untaxed dollars, rather than with after-tax dollars, which are used to pay back most loans. The ruling saved Continental Oil $175 million in taxes, and facilitated the subsequent purchase of five of the ten top coal companies by other businesses.

Both of these rulings prompted Congress to pass laws reversing them, but the damage had been done. Stern argues that the present system of tax-law enforcement will continue to produce such antisocial decisions unless there are fundamental reforms. He points to three major defects of the present system:

(1) The "rest of the U.S. taxpayers" are not able to present opinions on tax cases to the IRS either before or after its rulings.

(2) The appeal process is one-sided.

> If IRS' decision is unfavorable to the requesting company, it can proceed with the intended course of action, refuse to pay the tax, and contest the IRS position in a court of law. If the ruling . . . favors the requesting company, shifts a major tax burden onto the rest of the taxpayers—they have no corresponding right to challenge the ruling in court no matter how unjustified IRS' action might be found there.

(3) Despite congressional attempts to ensure that all IRS rulings of "precedential" value are made public the public is not informed of many significant IRS decisions.

To make the tax system more open Stern proposes that

(1) All IRS rulings should be made public.
(2) Opportunity should be provided for public comment before major rulings take effect.
(3) The right of citizens to challenge particular rulings in court should be broadened.

Reflecting on Stern's arguments, and other recent criticisms of our tax system by Robert Lampman, Herman Miller, Taylor Branch, and

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James Fallows, one wonders why the prospects for a truly progressive tax system now seem so dismal. After all, Congress provided for a "progressive" income tax more than a half-decade ago.

There are two problems. First, the American people have never understood and accepted the *principle* of progressive taxation. For most, fair taxation means equal taxation, not progressive taxation. Second, the American people have not understood that what they feel to be an unfair tax burden is a consequence of the nonprogressive functioning of our tax system. While individuals have long viewed their tax burden as too heavy, they have attributed this fact to criminality, corruption, excessive government spending, and government waste, rather than to a systematic bias in the tax laws in favor of corporate wealth.

DAVID BENSMAN □

NIXON WIELDS THE HATCHET *(continued from page 134)*

rest of the country. The Administration points proudly to the fact that it is proposing a $629 million increase in funds for civil rights enforcement. But a large share of that money would go to provide grants, loans, and guarantees to minority businessmen. A worthy goal, perhaps, but one based on a limited view of the government's responsibility in the area of civil rights. These changes in priority, the swift succession of reorganizations and White House attacks on the integrity and motives of career government workers have had, of course, a demoralizing effect on federal employees. In HEW many of the bright young people who came with high expectations of service during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations are going back to school to take graduate degrees. In many agencies the older bureaucrats, architects of the social welfare programs that are Nixon's targets, are taking advantage of early retirement provisions.

A young OEO official says, "I don't have a fever for change anymore, because there's no leadership for change." An old-time bureaucrat recalls that in 1962, anticipating Medicare, people in her department began on their own to develop the supportive data needed for the legislation. They would never do that now. "There's a lack of commitment," she says.

One now finds in the agencies a climate of fear, almost of paranoia, a feeling that phone lines are being tapped and Nixon's spies are everywhere. "Some say there's a White House agent in each department to report on employee disloyalty," the *Wall Street Journal* reported recently.

A good example of the new no-nonsense is what's happening at OEO, now that Director Howard Phillips is preparing its liquidation. He has prohibited official travel outside of Washington and centralized all control within his office. On a smaller scale he seems to be operating the way his superiors in the White House do. The White House, too, seeks to centralize everything, even as it preaches decentralization and the return of responsibility to the local level. The President's reorganization of the executive branch, to create a supercabinet, may make for greater efficiency; but it also tends to insulate its members from congressional approval and inquiry.

As he seeks to concentrate the power of the executive branch, Nixon also moves to push responsibility for domestic welfare programs onto the states, largely through revenue-sharing. Some observers in Washington suggest that the budget cuts are part of a strategy to build support for the revenue-sharing proposals. Once the states see they are not getting federal money, this theory runs, they will pressure Congress to pass the necessary legislation.

Nixon has already won a significant victory on this score. Last year Congress approved a revenue-sharing plan that will make nearly $30 billion available to state and local governments over the next five years, and $5 billion have now been disbursed. Nixon wants Congress to approve four special revenue-sharing programs to "replace narrow categorical grant programs" (i.e., most of the major social welfare programs now extant). The special programs would distribute grants in four areas: urban community development, education, law enforcement and criminal justice, and manpower training.

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There are large misgivings about the revenue-sharing program. Senator Muskie observes:

> . . . a survey of city officials [questioned] by my Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations has brought some 750 responses . . . almost uniform in the evidence that few of this year's revenue-sharing allocations are being spent on social services. Congress gave communities many choices of what to do with the general revenue-sharing funds. Most used them for capital improvements, official salaries, public safety, and tax relief.

The National League of Cities–U.S. Conference of Mayors, in its own budget analysis, accused the Administration of breaching an agreement reached with mayors in August 1969 "that general revenue-sharing was not to be a substitute for ongoing federal categorical programs." Yet, the report notes, the budget explains the termination of grants for such things as OEO community-action programs, local open space, and libraries by saying the localities can pick up their cost if they like.

There are other problems with revenue-sharing. It leaves social decisions up to localities without giving them money to develop staffs that could make such decisions intelligently. "I could get excited about working at the local level and setting up staff there," the young OEO official says. But he realizes he would most likely not have adequate resources to work with. One example: for all its talk about getting local governments to deal with local problems, the 1974 budget would cut back on funds for state local departments of education, making it difficult for them to deal meaningfully with their school needs. Then there is the enormous task of monitoring the way the money is spent in some 39,000 different jurisdictions. With a staff of only 25 assigned to such work, the Treasury Department can inspect only 300 units a year.

The matter of handling domestic programs through revenue-sharing comes before Congress when it is already locked in battle with the President over a grave constitutional issue, i.e., his right to impound funds Congress has appropriated for specific purposes. According to an estimate by Rep. Joe L. Evins (D., Tenn.), he has already withheld, frozen, and impounded more than $12 billion appropriated for fiscal 1973. There is presidential precedent for impoundment, former Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg observes, "but never before has it been used to establish legislative priorities."

Congress is challenging the President in the courts, where a group of senators has brought suit against the impounding moves, and in the House and Senate. There the challenge takes several forms: bills have been introduced to limit the President's impoundment powers; House and Senate have repassed bills the President has previously vetoed, such as measures to increase grants to rivers and harbors and local airports and to restore funds to the Rural Environmental Assistance Program (REAP). Finally, Democratic chairmen of key appropriations subcommittees have warned they will take no action on the 1974 budget requests of the agencies subject to their jurisdiction until they reactivate programs for which money has already been allocated. It is too early to predict who will win, but the proclivity of Congress to cave in before White House pressure is not reassuring.

The showdown in the approaching fight over revenue-sharing may well come in the area of education. Carl Perkins, the Kentucky Democrat who heads the House Education and Labor Committee, has already begun hearings on a bill to extend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, one of President Johnson's triumphs. The law is scheduled to expire June 30, though it can be extended automatically until next year. Nixon would like to substitute a special education revenue-sharing bill for the ESEA, which contains, incidentally, a provision he dislikes, Title I: the celebrated program of aid to disadvantaged children. If revenue-sharing for education prevails, the education groups fear little money will find its way to the inner-city schools.

If Congress fails to stop the President, what then? Nixon will be in a position of enormous power. Go see the President, Lyndon Johnson advised the anguished civil rights constituency when he met with its leaders in Austin, Texas, shortly before he died. "Don't start off by saying he's terrible. He doesn't think he's terrible." Johnson may have been too kind. Nixon *is* terrible—in his anger, his vindictiveness, in his need for secrecy and control, in his narrow vision of the role government should and can play to alleviate the sufferings of people's lives. □

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David Spitz

The Higher Reaches of the Lower Orders

A Critique of the Theories of B. F. Skinner

There is only one serious question in political philosophy: What manner of men do we take ourselves and others to be? All other issues—not least the next fundamental question, By what right does any man or class command the services of another?—derive from the answer we give to this central question.

I wish to consider here B. F. Skinner's answers to these questions.[1] They constitute, if I understand them correctly, an argument in contempt of man, turning on a currently fashionable, though age-old, thesis: that the bulk of mankind is unable or unfit to be free; that men should accordingly be divided, on the basis of some fixed criteria, into superior and inferior orders; and that some version of the closed rather than the open society is consequently the proper (and indeed unavoidable) medium for realizing this principle. I shall argue against these notions, which I take to be morally deficient, politically pernicious, and unworkable. They are not, however, without certain elements of plausibility, a circumstance that lends poignancy to the human situation in our time. All the more so since the political authoritarianism entailed by Skinner's teaching comes bedecked in fashionable "scientific" credentials and wins the approval of some people who even think of themselves as humanists and liberals.

This is a revised version of a paper prepared for the Conference on the Open Society, Bellagio, Italy, June 28–July 4, 1972. I am indebted to the Rockefeller Foundation, to Professor Dante Germino, organizer of the Conference, and to my colleagues at the Villa Serbelloni.

[1] In his book *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971).

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I

In every society—save perhaps for the "primitive"—there are pyramids of status and power, reflecting differences of wealth and birth, income and occupation, race and religion and sex, capacity and willingness to employ force and fraud, mental and moral attainments.

I mean here by a closed society one in which inherited or assigned standings in the pyramids of status and power are approved and maintained. By an open society I mean one in which those at the base or on the lower rungs of those pyramids refuse to accept their assigned roles and struggle to rise toward the top, *and* where the beliefs and social and political arrangements make it reasonably possible for nearly all of them to engage in that struggle, if they so wish.

Merely to state so bald a polarity should rightly arouse the suspicion that these are at best ideal types. No closed society—apart, perhaps, from the extreme caste systems of fiefdoms in an earlier India or the great dynasties of an earlier Asia—has been completely closed; almost always there have been some areas in which men were at least partially free to rise. So too with open societies. There is always a considerable gap between rhetoric and practice: even those states we label democratic are disfigured by arrangements that hinder or block legitimate access to higher place and power. In the real world *all* societies have probably been mixed rather than pure types. The intriguing questions then are, How closed or open can a closed or open society be if it is to maintain and perpetuate itself? and what kinds of human beings live in and are likely to be produced by relatively closed or open societies?

In raising this last question I am returning to John Stuart Mill's insistence that the true test of a good government is not its power or wealth but the qualities—the virtue and intelligence—of its citizens. For if the state exists for man rather than man for the state, the only justification of a state is not mere survival but progress—understanding by progress a change in the quality of men's lives that will enable them to move from the sorry creatures many are to what they might and ought to be.

But what ought a man to be? What is the essence of a man as distinct from his historical or momentary existence? To this question political philosophers have given a multiplicity of answers.

Man, they have said, is a featherless biped. If so, replied the skeptic, he is a plucked chicken. Man is a rational animal. If so, how do you account for the madness with which he misgoverns himself? Man is a fragmented being, with many roles and faces, an entire *dramatis personae* within a single individual, and one therefore who will never be fully known. He is a stranger even to himself. If so, how shall we treat him, how indeed shall we know who he is? So the debate has gone.

But throughout this long debate one belief at least has seldom been challenged: that man is a sentient and (at his best) reflective creature; consequently, though he may at times act chaotically, more commonly he acts in accord with his feelings—whether we call these passions, sentiments, impulses, or desires—and what he thinks right. Disagreements concerning the nature of man have thus turned not on whether he feels and thinks but on the *character* of his thoughts and emotions, and on the relation of those thoughts and emotions to his actions: on whether "right" desires and "right" thoughts are the province of all men or only a gifted few, whether man's reason is the servant or the master of his passions (or whether reason is itself but one of the more compelling passions), and whether his behavior follows from those thoughts and emotions or is sometimes in conflict with them.

Now, however, we are told that these are mistaken grounds of disagreement. B. F. Skinner, author of one of our less genial and more authoritarian utopias,[2] and of other

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[2] *Walden Two* (New York: Macmillan, 1948; paperback ed., 1962).

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works denigrating man's freedom,[3] has in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity,* the Summa Scientifica of his life's work, spelled out what man really is.

Man, according to Skinner, is a behaving, not a feeling and thinking animals; as such, he must be conditioned to behave rightly, not be permitted to act wrongly; and we can so condition him only if we understand that the causes of his behavior lie beyond the individual himself, not in his attitudes or states of mind but in his cultural and social environment. As Skinner puts it:

> What is being abolished is autonomous man —the inner man, . . . the man defended by the literatures of freedom and dignity. His abolition has long been overdue. . . . A scientific analysis of behavior dispossesses autonomous man and turns the control he has been said to exert over to the environment. . . . What is needed is more control, not less. . . . The problem is to design a world which will be liked not by people as they now are but by those who live in it. . . . It is science or nothing. . . .[4]

From this perspective, the issue of closed versus open societies turns on different conceptions of what it means to be a man—not, be it emphasized, man as he is but as he might and ought to be. In Skinner's view, man is and ought to be—indeed, he *must* be, for there is no choice—a controlled being, a creature rather than a creator of his environment. In another view—and I shall here oppose to Skinner only that liberal tradition which may be said to run from John Stuart Mill through Russell, MacIver, and Morris R. Cohen to Camus and the democratic socialists of our own day—man is the one creature on earth who refuses, and ought to refuse, to be what he is. If he is to acquire the full stature of a human being, he must be a discontented and, more important, a self-protecting and self-dependent animal.

He must be a discontented man, according to this liberal tradition, because, as a perceiving animal, he is aware that he lives in a disharmonious and (in certain crucial respects) an unjust world. What is needed, then, are power and intelligence and above all the passion for justice that will enable the legitimately discontented man (and others like him who will always exist in our imperfect world) to alter the seemingly unalterable order of things.

This is why Mill and other liberals insist that to be a man one should exercise one's own judgment, make one's own choices. It is of course impossible to imagine a life deprived of all choices; for even the failure or refusal to choose, which is a surrender to persons or impersonal forces outside one's self, is itself an act of choice. But the crucial choice, which is the ability and right to make choices, is above all others the distinctive quality of what it means to be human. Why, it must be asked, does a man have a mind if not to exercise it? And what does it mean to exercise one's mind if not to reflect upon and choose among alternatives? And what is the point of such reflection and choice if, after that decision, he is told that it is of no account, he must abide by the decision of another? That, if left alone, he may in fact choose wrongly is a distinct possibility. But apart from the fact that fallibility also attends the choices of a superior (even if allegedly wiser) power, it is the meaning of freedom that a man take the risk of his own option. The right to be wrong, the right to be different, is (in this view) precisely what determines his manhood.

Now it is axiomatic that rights are not self-enforcing. Nor, on the historical record, are the rights of men in the lower orders likely to be held inviolate if entrusted to the higher orders. To be a self-dependent (autonomous) man requires not merely intelligence but also power to resist the will

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[3] E.g., *Science and Human Behavior* (New York: Macmillan, 1953) and "Freedom and the Control of Men," *American Scholar,* Winter 1955–56, pp. 47–65.

[4] *Beyond Freedom and Dignity,* pp. 200, 205, 177, 164, 160.

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of those whose judgment runs counter to his own. He must look not to the forbearance of others but to himself. He must be able to protect himself effectively. And this means not that he be given more power than they—for what then would protect the others from his possible encroachments on *their* right to be wrong or different?—but that he be given an equal power and opportunity to use it.

This conception of equality, so necessary to the idea of liberty and of a self-dependent and self-protecting man, merits special emphasis as a distinguishing feature between closed and open societies. In closed societies, no matter how enlightened and virtuous the ruling or despotic class, inequality and degradation remain the fate of the lower orders; for the one thing even the best of despots cannot do is to produce a self-sufficient and virtuous citizenry. In open societies, despite all deficiencies in institutions, the egalitarian principle remains central. If Camus and Silone are right in saying that man is a rebel who affirms his existence by fighting against his own condition, then without equality of power and opportunity, neither reason nor passion will enable him to transcend his miserable existence.

So, too, the conception of liberty alluded to here requires special emphasis. Every society, closed or open, professes a love of liberty. Every society, closed or open, means by liberty at least the absence of alien rule. But what is characteristic of closed societies is that they also mean by liberty the right of the government officially to suppress undesirable views, most commonly on matters of morality and political right. Closed societies generally mean by liberty what has come to be called "true" or "real" freedom. This is, the freedom to do and say only the "right" things—as stipulated by God or nature or tradition or, what is decisive in practice, by those earthly powers who claim to know, and who therefore claim the exclusive power to apply, those alleged teachings. Or, if we move from normal to bizarre closed societies, that is, to those totalitarian societies based not on some alleged objective truth or binding principle but on the sheer exertion of power—as embodied, for example, in the Nazi and Fascist systems—"true" or "real" freedom becomes no more than compliance with the dictator's intuitive will.

"What is curious about this position," to cite but one of our previously mentioned liberal writers, "is the belief that if impartial investigation were permitted it would lead men to the wrong conclusion, and that ignorance is, therefore, the only safeguard against error." [5] But even if we do not, for the moment, press this objection, it remains altogether clear that the point of view embraced by proponents of the closed society cannot be acceptable to any person who conceives of man as a rational and autonomous creature and who consequently wishes our action to be guided by reason.

Open societies not only tolerate but encourage the free expression and examination of "objectionable" ideas. In the open society *all* questions are, or ought to be, open to discussion; all rulers subject to public criticism and expulsion from office; all opinions, including—indeed especially—those of the government, viewed with greater or lesser measures of doubt. What is entailed is man's freedom to articulate not only the "right" but the "wrong" ideas. Also entailed may be a predisposition, in the name of freedom, to leave men alone, to allow them to pursue their actual rather than allegedly real wills, at least in realms (such as religion) that do not require them to come into injurious conflict with one another.

So we return to the central questions: What, really, is this thing called man? What do closed and open societies make of man and do with man? No less important, what do they require man to do for himself? And what justifications attend these different understandings and practices?

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[5] Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957), pp. 182–83.

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II

Surely we must distrust all those who give simple answers to these questions, and Skinner gives simple answers. But what lends some verisimilitude to his answers is the undeniable fact that human or social conditioning has always been attempted and has often, in some measure, been successful.

Consider education and law. Education has always had as a primary purpose the influencing of men's minds. It seeks to control (modify) human behavior by instructing (instilling, training, indoctrinating, manipulating) children in proper codes of belief and modes of behavior. And surely it is one of the functions of law to control (modify) human behavior, in part through a system of punishments, in part through persuasion. Nor are education and law the only instruments through which men have sought to control (modify) human behavior. Force has regularly been employed to compel men to behave in ways they dislike. And more recently drugs, whether tranquilizers or stimulants, have come into widespread use for the same purpose. The techniques depicted by Koestler in *Darkness at Noon* and by Orwell in *1984*, and those utilized by the Chinese Communists in the "brainwashing" of prisoners, are testimonials to the power of this idea in the modern world.

All this is familiar enough. If a society is to function as some sort of cohesive entity, it must favor some doctrines and practices over others. It must develop or reflect a consensus on values and procedures that "define" it. Without such a consensus, however limited, a society can form neither a nation nor a state but must remain an amorphous conglomeration of beings. But in another sense, this closing of the environment may entail what Mosca has called "a real unbalancing of the spirit," an overly careful circumscribing of life. Then, unless the child is one of those rare individuals whose intellect and circumstances enable him to think for himself, he will, if raised a religious or political fanatic, become such a fanatic. To admit rays of light from other moral and intellectual worlds is to encourage doubts and desertions. In this way not only do the sane sometimes lead the mad but the mad often force the sane to keep them company.[6]

Insofar, then, as Skinner puts his faith in some form of conditioning, and stresses in this context the importance of environment, he offers not a new idea but simply a new technique to improve or more effectively implement an old idea.

It is Skinner's contention that it is misleading and unscientific to describe men in terms of "personalities, states of mind, feelings, traits of character, plan, purposes, intentions, or the other perquisites of autonomous man." Men are nothing but behaving animals, and human behavior is the automatic outcome of environmental forces. We are what our environment compels us to be. Through proper environmental manipulation or engineering—what Skinner calls "a technology of behavior" or "operant conditioning"—it should then be possible to structure the environment (design the right culture) so as to produce (control) right behavior. This involves a carefully planned (programmed, scheduled) sequence of contingencies or reinforcements, positive rather than negative (or aversive), because negative reinforcements not only lead to undesirable consequences—e.g., they reinforce the nagging parent rather than the submitting child—but are ultimately self-defeating. As Skinner says:

> All control is exerted by the environment. . . . No one directly changes a mind. By manipulating environmental contingencies, one makes changes which are said to indicate a change of mind, but if there is any effect, it is on behavior. . . . In the scientific view . . . a person's behavior is determined by a genetic endowment traceable to the evolutionary history of the species and by

[6] Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, trans. Kahn, ed. Livingston (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1939), pp. 184–87.

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the environmental circumstances to which as an individual he has been exposed.[7]

But while Skinner talks of genetics and physics, what he means by environment is not the biological or physical—which one might suppose are what his theory requires—but the cultural or social. It is this cultural or social environment that "can be changed" (manipulated, repaired) to produce consequences that will modify behavior.

Now one might think that by expressing a preference for one type of culture or pattern of behavior rather than another, Skinner is introducing a moral dimension into his analysis—as indeed he is. But he insists throughout that these issues are discussed "from a scientific point of view." One might also think that if the environment can be changed, it cannot also be true that *all* control is exerted by the environment. The argument is thus flawed from the very outset, and becomes all the more egregiously wrong as one traces out its consequences.

If the environment is a culture, and a culture is defined as "a set of contingencies of reinforcement" or "a set of practices," what does it mean to say that the environment "acts," that "it does not push or pull, it *selects,*" that it "is 'responsible' for objectionable behavior" (e.g., juvenile delinquency), that it can "induce" people to change their behavior? A culture is a concept, not a person, and to reify a concept by giving it a will, with the power to judge and direct, is to move not into the science of human behavior but into a realm of verbal magic. It is also to deny what Skinner no less vehemently affirms: that "the environment can be manipulated," that "we can arrange contingencies," that "man must repair [the damage he has done to his environment] or all is lost," that while man is indeed controlled by his environment, "it is an environment largely of his own making," that "the individual controls himself by manipulating the world in which he lives." If these latter statements are to be taken at face value, then the environment, the culture, is not some abstract or even concrete thing "out there," which moves as a monolithic entity upon the individual or nation, molding it to that environment's will, whatever that might be. It is rather persons who make and mold the culture, which in turn constitutes the conditions within which and through which individuals function.

Skinner cannot have it both ways. Either he is an environmental or mechanistic determinist (which he avowedly is), in which case man is the creature but not the creator of his environment, or he holds (as he also does) that man can arrange "environments in which specific consequences are contingent upon it [*sic*]," in which case man is the creator and not the creature of his environment. If, however, man is both creature and creator, if there is some sort of reciprocal relationship or feedback—a doctrine that Skinner also affirms—then there is no determinism at all. It is hard to understand precisely which view Skinner holds, since he variously asserts all of them.

But this is not all. Skinner recognizes that environments differ considerably. "People," he says at one point, "are extraordinarily different in different places, and possibly just because of the places." And when he argues for planned diversification—of which more later—he concedes that the environment even within a nation (or culture?) is not monolithic. It follows, though Skinner does not draw this inference, that people are often different even in the same place, and may be the same even in different places. What then should the controllers do? Should they adjust (say) the rich child to the slum environment, or the slum child to the affluent environment, or maintain each child in his own or in still another environment? Does it even follow, given genetic and other differences, that the same environment will have the same effect on all persons within that environment? Clearly the controllers, if

[7] *Beyond Freedom and Dignity,* pp. 82, 92, 101.

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they could do through "operant conditioning" what Skinner believes it is possible for them to do, must make an ethical along with a scientific choice: they can take the world as it is and fit man into it; they can take man as he is and change the world to conform to man's nature and requirements; or they can change both man and the world so that both will be other (and presumably better) than they are. But if the controllers no less than the controlled are environmentally determined, how can they choose? And if they can choose, they are not only *not* the subject of deterministic forces, they are confronted by the need to provide justifications for their choices. All of which is to move them from "behaving" to autonomous men.

I would dwell a bit longer on this problem of the controllers. If the values implanted in the controllers' minds are determined by environmental forces—or if, to adhere to Skinner's terminology, the behavior of the controllers is determined by the culture—as are the values (or behavior) of the controlled, on what grounds can Skinner argue that the controllers should arrange the contingencies that will alter people's behavior rather than the reverse? Clearly, this cannot be defended by invoking the environmental forces themselves, for these are common to both controllers and controlled and should, precisely because they are the same, produce the same behavior (or values) in both. Indeed, given this common impact, where did the controllers come from in the first place? Since none of us, in the pre-Skinnerian world, is a controller, what in the environment selects a fortunate (and gifted?) few and transforms them from the controlled creatures they (along with the rest of us) are, into a new ruling class that will now control the environment that up to this moment has controlled us all? What, that is to say, destroys the controlling power of the environment? Further, if the behavior of the controllers is different—and it must be different, otherwise there is no point to Skinner's argument that the controllers can (and must) change the world from its present unsatisfactory state to a better one—then either there are different environmental forces at work or the same environmental forces produce different forms of behavior. On Skinner's terms, the latter possibility is self-evidently absurd. But the former possibility, if true, only returns us to the controllers' problem of choice. Skinner excludes choice, holding that men do not in fact choose, that the environment chooses for them, in which case of course it is meaningless to ask whether they ought to choose, and by what criteria. Yet it is impossible to escape the fact that the controllers must choose. Skinner concedes this in a revealing passage:

> Man as we know him, for better or for worse, is what man has made of man. . . . When a person changes his physical or social environment "intentionally"—that is, in order to change human behavior, possibly including his own—he plays two roles: one as a controller, as the designer of a controlling culture, and another as the controlled, as the product of a culture. . . . The man that man has made is the product of the culture man has devised.[8]

To the extent, then, that the controllers can and do choose—and they *must* choose if man is to be made by man—then Skinner denies his own case on empirical grounds. If he says (as he also does) that the controllers *ought* to choose one set of contingencies rather than another, to select one pattern of desired behavior over another, he denies his case on normative grounds. In the latter situation, of course, he needs to provide appropriate criteria for his preferences, which leads us again into the ethical realm.

"Operant conditioning" is attended by at least two other difficulties. One is the role of accident and of the unanticipated consequences of intended actions. Chance has played an unascertainable role in human

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[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 206–208.

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history, yet no one will deny its importance —in scientific discovery, military engagements, the resolution of economic and political conflicts, the everyday occurrences of human behavior. Even Skinner admits (though typically by overstatement) that "accidents have been responsible for almost everything men have achieved to date, and they will no doubt continue to contribute to human accomplishments." He goes on to add, however, that "there is no virtue in accident as such." This last statement is of course unexceptionable, but it does not remove the difficulty accident poses for Skinner's thesis. For if it is true that accident has played the major role and Skinner concedes to it, how can he argue that it is always the environment that determines human behavior? Surely accident cannot be explained by contingencies of reinforcement. And if accident is likely to play as important a role in man's future, how can he place so much confidence in the efficacy of his behavioral engineering? Surely even carefully programmed sequences of contingencies will be afflicted again and again by unforeseen and uncontrollable events.

IF SKINNER SEEKS to design a better culture, he must know at least two things: that the culture he prefers is indeed "better" and that the contingencies he would arrange are appropriate means to achieving that end. It is more than problematical whether, qua scientist, he knows, or can know, either of these things. If he knows the former at all, he can know it only as a moral philosopher, not as a scientist; and he cannot know it as a moral philosopher because, on his own terms, it is not merely the environment which does the selecting but it is behavior, not knowing, that defines the human animal. Man, after all—including, presumably, Skinner and his "controllers"— is not a thinking or feeling animal, only a behaving animal; he does not possess a plan or purposes or intentions, nor is he governed by a state of mind or the other perquisites of autonomous man. Hence he designs only what he is compelled by his environment to design; he can neither choose that design nor know that it is better than what presently exists. In the same way, the contingencies he would schedule cannot produce "a better world," for they will be frustrated by accident, by the unanticipated consequences of the controllers' actions. And these actions, in turn, cannot even be "intended," for the controllers can have no purposes or intentions, since they are merely behaving animals in an environmentally determined world. If, to rescue his case, Skinner would retreat from his mechanistic determinism to the voluntaristic choices of men "intentionally" seeking to remake themselves (or others), he not only repudiates his central doctrine but relies on the foolishness of choice he has consistently decried.

A second difficulty plagues the idea of "operant conditioning." It is, as I have tried to point out, truistic to say that societies attempt to condition (socialize) their children (and also, perhaps, their adults), and that in some measure they frequently succeed. But it is not always simply truistic. Consider the following possibilities:

(1) In heterogeneous and pluralistic societies, socialization or conditioning takes different forms and produces a variety of results. Differences of behavior may (probably will) make for conflict, in which case the controllers, if they are to achieve Skinner's better world, must resolve those conflicts by rearranging contingencies so as to produce a harmonious order. But which differences shall be suppressed and which contingencies chosen? Unavoidably, we are back once again to the problem of choice and its relation to environmental determinism.

(2) Where a society values (behaves so as to produce) critical and inquiring minds, that is to say, people who go about asking questions and seeking answers, it may be possible to arrange a sequence of contingencies that will bring about (or perpetuate) the very autonomous men Skinner deplores and seeks

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to abolish. Indeed, the very fact that Skinner seeks to abolish or dispossess autonomous men presupposes that they already exist. If so, to abolish them entails a judgment that autonomous men are evil or harmful or wrong and *ought,* therefore, to be eliminated. But how, if men are merely (and deterministically) behaving animals, can they be termed evil or harmful or wrong? If they are so judged, we require ethical criteria by which to validate such a judgment and to vindicate their calculated transformation to "better" men. Moreover, what are "better" men? Again, this is not a scientific but a moral determination. Accordingly, let us now turn to Skinner's conception of ethics and a better (just?) society.

III

Skinner cannot really be said to have an ethical system, for in an environmentally determined world—that is, a world bereft of conscious choice—men (including of necessity Skinner himself) behave as they must, not as they think they ought to. And where men do what they must do, they have no responsibility for their behavior, so that neither praise nor censure attaches to their actions. Those actions cannot be termed good or bad; they are merely forms of behavior to be observed.

If, furthermore, all this were true, there would be no point in seeking to change the world (and human behavior) from what it is to something else. Yet Skinner does mean to change the world. He wants men to be "happy, informed, skillful, well behaved and productive." He wants them to be not heroic but "automatically good." He wants them to

> live together without quarreling, maintain themselves by producing the food, shelter, and clothing they need, enjoy themselves and contribute to the enjoyment of others in art, music, literature, and games, consume only a reasonable part of the resources of the world and add as little as possible to its pollution, bear no more children than can be raised decently, continue to explore the world around them and discover better ways of dealing with it, and come to know themselves accurately and, therefore, manage themselves effectively.[9]

Above all, he wants the culture to survive, for survival is not merely the principal value, it is "the only value according to which a culture is eventually to be judged."

This last assertion, of course, is self-evidently untrue. If the elements mentioned by Skinner in the quoted statement—peace, affluence, creativity, decency, self-knowledge, effective management—are what he esteems, then not survival per se but survival of a particular kind of culture is the crucial value. But what, apart from such impossible (for a determinist) expectations as self-knowledge, can be meant by the survival (or death) of a culture?

We have already been told that a culture is "the social environment," "a set of practices," "a set of contingencies of reinforcement." Can these perish or die as an individual may be said to die? Is this the sense in which Athenian culture (say) may be said to have died? If so, it can only be because culture is something that is bound in space and time, in which case no culture can be said to have survived and no culture can hope to survive. But if culture embraces entities (or practices) that permeate and transcend spatial and temporal boundaries, then Athenian culture did not die with Sparta's conquest of Athens or with the emergence of the Roman Empire. The identity "Athens" may not have survived, at least not in the form we associate with classical Athens, but its culture survived. In this sense cultures do not die but are adapted and adopted by later cultures. Skinner himself does not seek totally to destroy our old culture, only to alter some of its practices so as to correct what he takes to be shortcomings. He values much of what it already contains. "Our culture," he tells us, "has pro-

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[9] "Freedom and the Control of Men," p. 47; see also *Beyond Freedom and Dignity,* p. 214.

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duced the science and technology it needs to save itself." Surely, then, in designing the new culture, the needed science and technology will remain; some contingencies, some part of the environment will survive.

In point of fact, the term "culture" is not a wholly convincing unit of analysis. One cannot study American culture at any point in its development without taking account of a wider set of (conditioning) influences originating outside of America. We may grant that American culture can be made intelligible by a consideration of historic forces operating on a restricted geographic scale. But science and technology and even the idea of a national state were not sired in America. Nor can America claim exclusive paternity of its language and literature, art and music, dress, games and manners. To view the landscape of culture through Skinnerian eyes is to move into a grossly distorted world; it is also to miss the ever-continuing cross-fertilization of both American and non-American cultures.[10]

That Skinner attaches his ill-conceived notion of culture to the equally ambiguous (and long-discredited) theory of the survival of the fittest only compounds the implausibility of his doctrine. To say that what is fittest to survive, survives, is really to say no more than that we shall choose to call fittest that which survives.[11] For it does not know what is fit to survive until after it has survived; and it can only say it was fit to survive because it survived. All of which is not merely a circular argument but is to beg the question, What in fact is the fittest? The reputable trader may be put out of business by his unscrupulous competitor, the thoughtful statesman be thrust aside by the demagogue. If these survivors are the fittest, it ill behooves Skinner to recommend their cause.

Survival of a culture, then, is not a viable but an empty and meaningless value, recommending itself only to those who feel more comfortable with concepts of stability and adjustment than with the more difficult notions of freedom, justice, and equality. Can anything more be said for Skinner's other ethical prescriptions?

Consider his idea—if a behaviorist (in Skinner's understanding of the term) can be said to have an *idea*—of "automatic goodness." Skinner wants men to be happy and well behaved. But what does it mean to be happy, and why should men behave well? How, in fact, do we distinguish behaving well from behaving badly? And is not the very drawing of a distinction between good and bad behavior (for in Skinner's lexicon to "behave well" is to "be good") an affirmation of morality rather than of science?

To a moral philosopher these might appear to be difficult (and clearly ethical) questions. But to Skinner they are scientific and readily answerable. He begins by posing the issue this way: "If a scientific analysis can tell us how to change behavior, can it tell us what changes to make?" This is not (he insists) a question of morality but

> a question about the behavior of those who do in fact propose and make changes. People act to improve the world and to progress toward a better way of life for good reasons, and among the reasons are certain consequences of their behavior, and among those consequences are the things people value and call good. . . . Those who observe cultures do not see ideas or values. They see how people live, how they raise their children, how they gather or cultivate food, what kinds of dwellings they live in, what they wear, what games they play, how they treat each other, how they govern themselves, and so on. These are the customs, the customary *behaviors,* of a people. To explain them we must turn to the contingencies which generate them. . . . The social

[10] Cf. Morris Watnick, "Toynbee's Nine Books of History against the Pagans," *Antioch Review,* vol. 7 (1947), pp. 587–602.

[11] Skinner has repeated this tautology in a recent article, where he says: "A practice that makes a culture more likely to survive survives with the culture." In "Humanism and Behaviorism," *Humanist,* July–August 1972, p. 20.

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contingencies, or the behaviors they generate, are the "ideas" of a culture; the reinforcers that appear in the contingencies are its "values."

To make a value judgment by calling something good or bad is to classify it in terms of its reinforcing effects. . . . Good things are positive reinforcers. . . . The things we call bad . . . are all negative reinforcers. . . . Things are good (positively reinforcing) or bad (negatively reinforcing) presumably because of the contingencies of survival under which the species evolved.[12]

The problem, then, "is to induce people not to be good but to behave well." Indeed,

We can conceive of moral training which is so adequate to the demands of the culture that men will be good practically automatically, but to that extent they will be deprived of the right to moral heroism, since we seldom admire automatic goodness. Yet if we consider the end of morals rather than certain virtuous means, is not "automatic goodness" a desirable state of affairs? [13]

Skinner, then, seeks to make it easier for men to be good (behave well). He wants to reduce what is (for autonomous men) the agonizing tension between individual inclinations and social precepts by habituating (conditioning) them to the requirements of proper ("virtuous") behavior, as this proper behavior is defined in the society. Such conformity is not to be achieved through repression, e.g., fear of punishment, but through that "operant conditioning" that will make them "automatically" desire, and consequently act in accordance with, what is socially approved. This, of course, requires a thorough understanding of human nature (behavior), a knowledge so complete that (as the skeptical Hobbes said) it would enable us to eliminate avarice and ambition and "enjoy . . . immortal peace." Skinner admits that we do not yet have such complete knowledge, that his behaviorist psychology "is not yet ready to solve all our problems"; but, he goes on to say, "it is a science in progress, and its ultimate adequacy cannot now be judged."

One might suppose that if Skinner's present knowledge is short of what is required for the implementation of his teaching, he would be loath to press his argument as vigorously as he does. But let this go for the moment. What is crucial here is his notion that if men can be conditioned to behave as society (or his controllers—and it is not clear that these are always the same, for the controllers, it must be remembered, are charged with *changing* the culture) requires them to behave, they will be automatically good; that this is the proper conception of what it means to be a man; and that such men behaving in those required ways will be happy.

Doubtless some things can be said in support of these views: that we will, in all likelihood, continue to increase our knowledge of human nature (behavior); that in consequence of this better understanding and of the further progress that will be made in behavioral engineering we will be able more effectively to condition (control) children, and thus men; that such conditioning will, to the degree that it is successful, eliminate the need for painful thought and thereby ease anxiety; that if proper behavior becomes effortless it becomes more certain, and society as a whole will benefit (in the sense that it will get what it demands); and that if "goodness" becomes automatic, and therefore less difficult, human energies can be channeled more efficiently into other needed tasks.[14]

But all too much can be said against these views, not least that the hope it holds out is of a drab and morally deficient world. For

[12] *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, pp. 103–105, 127–28.

[13] "Freedom and the Control of Men," pp. 60–61.

[14] See George Kateb, *Utopia and Its Enemies* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), chap. 6—though it should be noted that Kateb's careful and searching analysis, which appeared prior to the publication of Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, contains the most trenchant criticism of Skinner's views known to me. Kateb has commented on Skinner's last book in the *Atlantic*, October 1971, 122–25.

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suppose Skinner is correct, that he can do all he claims, that he can make men behave well (be "good" or "virtuous") through habit, without effort and thought. What, then, is he making of men? What is he doing with and to men? Is he not converting them into automated beings or humanized robots? Is he not reducing them to untroubled innocents dwelling in a state of perpetual childhood? If a better world means better men, what shall we say of a doctrine that quite literally imprisons man, substituting for one kind of containment a more radical and dangerous restriction of the mind? It may of course be argued, in strict adherence to Skinner's behaviorist psychology, that man has no mind, in which case we are dealing not with imprisonment but only with nonviolent (and presumably benevolent) control of man's behavior. Still, it is difficult to see why such control (conditioning) is not in fact the replacement of one form of power by another. It operates as a sort of prenatal excision or molding, which is not significantly different in principle from control exercised after the act. It may, indeed, because such prenatal control is more subtle and more difficult to detect or correct, constitute a far more threatening affront to man's critical faculties than if we were dealing with open and visible dangers. No less than violence, it is a form of coercion in that it compels man to act, or refrain from acting, in accordance with another's will. And where man has no choice but to do as he is told, where indeed he is compelled to do this even without being told, he is surely no more than a puppet on a prearranged stage.

From this perspective, as George Kateb has argued, Skinner is a kind of playwright creating a world of strictly patterned activity. Men move about in expected (stipulated) ways. They substitute no words (for language, which is "verbal behavior," [15] is subject to the same Skinnerian rules) or gestures of their own, perform no unexpected acts, alter no scenes, introduce no improvisations. What they say and do is always controlled. They are predictable men.[16]

Now it is true that men whose actions are completely unpredictable are regarded as beyond the moral range, perhaps as lunatics. But there is a vast difference between normal (somewhat educated, somewhat socialized, perhaps somewhat conditioned) men and men totally conditioned to do what their controllers require. Such men lack all sense of, and must be relieved from, what we understand by moral responsibility; only their controllers are responsible for what they do. Such men, who are not men at all, are clearly incapable of performing Mill's self-protecting and self-dependent roles. Nor, since they are "automatically good" (behave well), can they be discontented men, or exercise—or worry about exercising—freedom of choice. That discontent, that freedom of choice, is reserved to the controllers, the new men of the higher orders, about whom, in spite of the awesome duties he assigns to them, Skinner says very little.

HERE, PERHAPS—and we are still speaking, it must be recalled, of the moral realm—we confront the most damaging element in this indictment of Skinner's teaching. For by excluding choice from what he clearly considers the lower orders of men, he deprives them of the one quality that would still enable them to retain their humanity. To live is to think, for what but reason distinguishes man from the other animals? What but his critical and creative faculties separates the cultivated from the primitive man? And what does it mean to reason if man must then set his reason aside and forgo the right to choose? It is, I suppose, plausible to say that in primitive societies customary respon-

[15] B. F. Skinner, *Verbal Behavior* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957); see also the now classic review by Noam Chomsky in *Language*, vol. 35 (1959), 26–58.

[16] See also Andrew Hacker, "The Specter of Predictable Man," *Antioch Review*, vol. 14 (1954), pp. 195–207, and "Dostoevsky's Disciples: Man and Sheep in Political Theory," *Journal of Politics*, vol. 17 (1955), pp. 590–613.

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ses are generally sufficient to meet the problems of the day. But in complex societies, what are accounted moral problems are not choices between good and evil—such a choice is so simple (i.e., morally undemanding) as hardly to be accounted a choice at all—but choices between alternatives that are both good, or seemingly good, or sufficiently ambiguous as to require the determination of the good, or mixtures of good and bad so that in choosing to do good we may find, to our discomfiture, that it is also necessary to pay the price of doing some harm. How, in this setting, is it possible automatically, without painful reflection, without, at times, inordinate suffering, to do good (behave well)? And if to these considerations we add the further fact that no moral act makes sense that does not take into account the probable consequences of one's actions, we can see that moral choice is the most taxing, and elevating, demand put upon the individual. It is precisely this quality that—to revert to the liberal conception of the autonomous man—constitutes the hallmark of what it means to be a man. Nowhere was Mill more eloquent than in pressing this point:

> He who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation. He who chooses his plan for himself, employs all his faculties. He must use observation to see, reasoning and judgment to foresee, activity to gather materials for decision, discrimination to decide, and when he has decided, firmness and self-control to hold to his deliberate decision. And these qualities he requires and exercises exactly in proportion as the part of his conduct which he determines according to his own judgment and feelings is a large one. It is possible that he might be guided in some good path, and kept out of harm's way, without any of these things. But what will be his comparative worth as a human being? It really is of importance, not only what men do, but also what manner of men they are that do it.[17]

Yet precisely these are the qualities Skinner would exclude in the name of automatic goodness.

Can there, however, be such a thing as automatic goodness or conditioned virtue? To do good (behave well) without knowing what, or why, or with what consequences, and in the face of what alternatives, one is doing it, is simply to do—not to do good, or, for that matter, evil. A man who acts automatically, that is, "unconsciously," without awareness of principles and reasons, causes and consequences, is at best going through certain motions. No rational conduct is involved here, no moral choices are made, nothing good—or bad—is done, for such a man knows nothing of good or bad; indeed, he knows nothing at all. He simply does.

He does what society (or the controllers) requires him to do. Conformity, not individuality (or creativity), is what Skinner esteems. It is true, says Skinner, that "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are basic rights." But he quickly adds two things: first, these are the rights of the individual and "have only a minor bearing on the survival of a culture"; and second, apart from the fact that survival of the culture is the paramount, indeed the only value, what counts is not *being* free but *feeling* free.

Now to *be* free is to be able to act undeterred by external restraints. To *feel* free may entail no more than one's recognition of this objective condition. It has also, however, been taken to mean one's voluntary and happy compliance with the dictates of authority—either because one welcomes the imposition of those external restraints or does not recognize them to be constraints at all. Conditioning, it is clear, operates at this last level. By focusing on the internal and anterior causes of human behavior, it seeks not to impose external restraints on "improper" desires but to alter man's nature (behavior) so that he will desire only what is "proper,"

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[17] John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1859; Everyman's ed., 1910), chap. 3, p. 117.

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i.e., what he *ought* to desire. Skinner confuses here the philosophical problem of determinism versus free will with the quite separate social problem of freedom and restraint. Hence, despite his repeated animadversions against such "mentalistic expressions" as the word "feeling," he can innocently—without embarrassment and indeed with approval—say that a young Chinese follower of Mao may feel freer and happier than most young Americans in doing what he is required to do, if he does them because of positive rather than negative reinforcements.[18] Such is the wisdom of our prophet.

It is also true, says Skinner, that man's "individuality is unquestioned. . . . No intentional culture can destroy that uniqueness." But he qualifies this too by adding that "the individual nevertheless remains merely a stage in a process," and that it is "the culture which induces him" to act as he does. These remarks may help us to understand the cavalier way in which Skinner deals with the problem of the dissenter in contemporary America. He says:

> A serious problem . . . arises when young people refuse to serve in the armed forces and desert or defect to other countries, but we shall not make an appreciable change by "inspiring greater loyalty or patriotism." What must be changed are the contingencies which induce young people to behave in given ways toward their governments.[19]

Why is *this* the correct behavior to be induced? Why not, instead, change the contingencies that will induce the government to behave in different ways—toward their young people or toward the role of the armed forces? Surely this is an ethical question of the greatest moment, but it is noteworthy that Skinner does not address himself to the issues involved, least of all to the question of what justice requires. Justice, to Skinner, is an empty word. But if behavior is to be changed, how can this determination be made without both a power of choice and a sense of justice?

It may be objected at this point that I have been unfair to Skinner's portrayal of a viable (better? just?) society, in that Skinner explicitly argues against uniformity or regimentation, which "might indeed work against further evolution," and for *"planned* diversification, in which the importance of variety is recognized." But this does not really militate against the image of conformity I have imputed to him. For one thing, if in a given situation uniformity rather than diversity can be shown to promote the survival of a culture, and if that survival is the overriding (or only) value, then not change but uniformity is clearly to be preferred. But the more important key to Skinner's teaching here is his underscored term *"planned* diversification." His notion of variety is not that of the open society, in which men are free to become (even if within limits) what their desires, opportunities, and circumstances allow them to become, but rather of the closed society, in which variety is carefully (and officially) circumscribed. He draws a revealing analogy when he says: "The breeding of plants and animals . . . also requires planned diversity." The variety that Skinner conceives is one in which the kinds and degrees of diversity, and the manner in which they may exist, are the result not of accident or free choice by the lower orders but of deliberate design, by the contingencies of reinforcement set into operation by the controllers.

Since the issue of fairness has been raised, it may be well at this point to insert Skinner's observation that "nothing in the behavioral process guarantees fair treatment, since the amount of behavior generated by a reinforcer depends upon the contingencies in which it appears."

In the face of all this, in what sense can

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[18] See Skinner's article, "Freedom and Dignity Revisited," *New York Times,* August 11, 1972. And compare K. J. Scott, "Conditioning and Freedom," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy,* vol. 37 (1959), pp. 215–20.

[19] *Beyond Freedom and Dignity,* p. 157.

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men be deemed to be happy in Skinner's world? "The problem," I have already quoted him as having said, "is to design a world which will be liked not by people as they now are but by those who live in it." But how, in Skinner's scheme of things, can people "like" anything? To like something is to have a feeling, or to manifest a state of mind, or to employ what Skinner calls a "mentalistic expression"; and these, he has repeatedly said, do not exist. "What is ultimately good or bad," he insists, "are things, not feelings." Yet he falls back again and again on this proscribed word. Somewhat curiously, he maintains that "a world that would be liked by contemporary people would perpetuate the status quo," as if contemporary people were a monolithic entity, all feeling content with things as they are and none of them seeking major, or even minor, changes. He believes that contemporary people like the status quo because they "have been taught to like it. A better world will be liked by those who live in it because it has been designed with an eye to what is, or can be, most reinforcing." This is in keeping with his view that "feelings about any institution depend upon the reinforcers the institution uses." If this is so, what people will like turns not on *their* preferences but on the preferences of the controller, who, Skinner affirms, will (to some extent) "necessarily design a world *he* likes." It is this world, this environment, that will shape (condition) people. They will "like" it because they will be taught (conditioned) to like it. Yet it is surely an elementary psychological truth that such a process of regression is likely to produce just the opposite result. As our rebellious youths have amply made clear, men do not and cannot really love those whose authority restricts their autonomy. If, despite this, they are happy, that happiness—if happiness it be—can only be the contentedness of men who are boring and do not even know they are bored.

IV

It is a commonplace that in politics and religion irrational beliefs and conduct are no bar to success. It is even arguable, perverse though this might seem (though not, of course, to a Dostoevsky or an Orwell), that all too many people look to a power in the universe greater than themselves; they seem to crave mystery and authority; they seek someone to whom they can entrust their conscience, someone who will remove the awful burdens of freedom, someone who will give them bread, security, and perhaps amusement, someone who will make them happy. It may well be, therefore, that Skinner's utopian vision will not founder—at least in its initial appeal—because of scientific and moral deficiencies. The fundamental question, or so he would have us believe, is not whether that vision is right or wrong (in any case meaningless terms) but, "Would it really work?" In Walden Two, he has argued, it did; and if there, why not everywhere?

Now we did not need a Marx to tell us that men have always been affected (somewhat conditioned) by impersonal forces outside themselves. Nor do we require unusual insight to understand that where there are monopolistic (or near-monopolistic) controls of the media of communication, not to speak of the deliberate use of terror, surveillance, and the concentration camp, the alternatives to which men are exposed are drastically limited; and that, if their horizons are narrowed, their thoughts and behavior are more easily channeled in desired directions. As techniques of conditioning are perfected we may expect greater and more effective socialization to take place.

Indeed, it was precisely because he recognized these things that Mill pleaded for a more autonomous man. Along with Tocqueville, he feared the increasing pressures of conformity. He understood that many (perhaps most) men were not free, did not wish to be free, and might not—in the absence

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of true understanding—become free. He sought, therefore, to set forth principles and institutions by which men might achieve what he believed only a very few superior intellects had thus far been able to achieve —the status of autonomous, self-reflective and self-dependent men. Such a status is not vouchsafed by history; it must be fought for and, with great difficulty, attained.

But this status, says Skinner, has not, cannot, and should not be attained. On the contrary, behavioral engineering ("operant conditioning") must prevail. There are, however, considerations that militate against his expectation.

Take, first, the problem of complexity and scale. It is one thing to control the behavior of rats in a maze or pigeons in a cage or infants in a carefully constructed box. It is more difficult (though according to Skinner quite possible) to control individuals and small groups of men. But it is surely an entirely different matter to control (as Skinner understands "control") hundreds of millions of people in a nation, or billions of people in the world. In the face of the variability and intractability of human nature, of qualitative as well as quantitative differences among men, to assume, as Skinner does, that "the behavioral processes in the world at large are the same as those in a utopian community, and practices have the same effects for the same reasons," is to gloss over the many (and I believe insuperable) difficulties that attend the vast distance between intention and achievement. For one thing, it does not follow that controls that work over many (even most) people will work over every individual; there will always be the odd person or (more likely) numbers of persons who will stray from the fold. For another, even if we think only of the generality of men, the number and quality of the controllers required to perform the close supervision of the upbringing of children, not to speak of the ongoing behavior of adults, would be simply fantastic. If Skinner really means to apply his many and diverse contingencies—in a degree of control (though not of savagery) that exceeds the practices of even the totalitarian states —to all sorts of people in varying stages of mental and moral development, in diverse social environments and levels of economic and political evolution, he requires an unimaginable number of qualified personnel in constant attendance upon them. It is instructive to note how Skinner, almost as an incidental thought, deals with this problem. He says: "Ethical control may survive in small groups, but the control of the population as a whole [which whole—the nation? the world?] must be delegated to specialists —to police, priests, owners, teachers, therapists, and so on, with their specialized reinforcers and their codified contingencies." How, and by what criteria, do owners (of what?) and police (as we know them in what country? as they might become?) emerge as equivalent to such therapists as the almigthy Frazier, founder and czar of Walden Two? Clearly, Skinner's methods, if they apply at all, are applicable only to some (perhaps many, but certainly not all) individuals and small communities.

(I must note, if parenthetically, Skinner's curious failure to confront the problem of class and class consciousness with respect to his controllers. He talks throughout as if his controllers will behave [create contingencies] in a remarkably consistent and proper way so as to bring about his desired results. This presupposes not simply a community of rulers but of their interests, purposes, shared values. But Skinner offers no evidence that his rulers will constitute such a class. It is, after all, one thing to have a single person [and mind?], the scientist-king Frazier, direct a society. It is quite another to form [by labeling] police, priests, owners, teachers, therapists, and the like, into a ruling class and expect these disparate persons to behave in a unified way. Since they have no "purposes" or "interests" but only behave as the environment compels them to behave, what in that environment will make

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them do the same things at the same times? Why should we expect them to act *as a class* when they lack the very consciousness that is crucial to their existence as a class?)

Modern societies are complexities of large-scale organizations, involving vast and complicated systems. The rules and codes employed in those systems are numerous and by no means unambiguous. Their internal arrangements are imperfect. The messages sent (the contingencies put into operation) —and errors or accidents may of course enter even at the point of origin—are neither consistent nor constant, and so too with the course they follow. If the message employs language (verbal behavior?), this is notoriously vague and its reception, by that strange and complex animal called man, often involves a transformation of the sender's intent into a variety of misinterpretations. The whole process makes certainty of transmission a very risky business.[20] Skinner seems utterly unaware of this problem.

He seems oblivious, too, to the vast problems entailed by the modification of a complex environment. Problems are not merely many and complex in our chaotic (at least disharmonious) universe; they are interrelated, so that to deal (say) with the problems of the blacks in contemporary America, we must come simultaneously to terms with poverty, education, employment, housing, medical care, family structure, and the like —as well as with (though Skinner will reject the phrase) the psychology of prejudice. What is the demonstrated competence of Skinner's therapists—or teachers, owners, police, and priests (and are there really to be priests in Skinner's utopian world?)— to resolve these problems? They cannot adequately solve any one of them without simultaneously solving all the others, and if, as Skinner proposes, they deal with them in piecemeal fashion instead, he must confront the further fact that a change in any one of these matters is itself likely to produce a change in another, and that this latter change (more accurately, series of changes) may be one of the unintended consequences of the controllers' actions. Thus to speak, as Skinner does, of modifying behavior and changing the environment is to ignore the complex realities hidden behind these simplistic terms.

TAKE, NOW, SKINNER'S IDEA of *planned* diversification. It has already been noted that the kinds and measure of diversity to be found in Skinner's new society will be determined by the controllers. The question now to be rasied is, How shall we know in advance whether the prescribed diversities will blend together into a coherent unity or be disruptive of that unity? And further: what shall we do if the controllers make a mistake, or misuse their power? One all too obvious answer is that *we*—if members of the lower orders—will not and cannot know these things. For not only can we not "know" (we can only behave); we will have been conditioned to behave as the controllers want us to behave, which is to say, we will do as we are told. But surely, unless the controllers are gods (and even Socrates did not contend that his philosopher-kings were gods), they are likely to make *some* mistakes, they are likely to misuse some of their powers some of the time and thereby endanger the working of the system. Is there, within Skinner's arrangements, a self-correcting mechanism or principle that will deal adequately with this problem?

Here is what Skinner says:

> The misuse of a technology of behavior is a serious matter, but we can guard against it best by looking not at putative controllers but at the contingencies under which they control. It is not the benevolence of a controller but the contingencies under which he controls benevolently which must be examined. All control is reciprocal, and an interchange between control and counter-

[20] On this point see Martin Landau, "Redundancy, Rationality, and the Problem of Duplication and Overlap," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 29 (1969), p. 349.

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control is essential to the evolution of a culture.

And again:

> Self-government often seems to solve the problem by identifying the controller with the controlled. The principle of making the controller a member of the group he controls should apply to the designer of a culture. . . . *He* will select goods or values which are important *to him* and arrange the kind of contingencies to which *he* can adapt.[21]

I have underscored certain words in the foregoing quotation to make it clear that what Skinner is talking about is not self-government (or countercontrol) at all. Like the Persian potentate (as recounted in the *History* of Herodotus) who addresses a group of fellow conspirators, he in effect says: "Let *us* choose out from the citizens a certain number of the worthiest, and put the government into their hands." Or, in keeping with a celebrated line in the *Iliad,* he argues: "Good sir, sit still and hearken to the words of others that are thy betters." The controller is a member of the group he governs only in the way in which an absolute monarch or tyrant may be said to be a member of the group he governs. He is *in* but not *of* the group. He is certainly not chosen *by* the group. Above all, if he too is a conditioned man, if he too is subject to contingencies of reinforcement designed to control his behavior, he is conditioned not by other persons—as he conditions others—and is subject only to contingencies of his own making—whereas others are subject to the contingencies that he has made.

In what sense, then, can it be said that there is a reciprocal relationship between the controller and the controlled? Only in the sense that there may be said to be a reciprocal relationship between the jailer and his prisoner. An influence there may well be: the behavior of the prisoner may elicit pity or compassion and kind treatment, or contempt or hatred and harsh treatment, from his superior, but this does not make them equals or promote effective control of the jailer by the prisoner; for it is still the superior who determines, and alone has the power to determine, the treatment that shall be accorded the fellow-member of his "group." After all, did not Skinner say that it is the controller who will select goods or values important to him, not to them, and that he will arrange the kind of contingencies to which he, not they, can adapt?

In effect, there is no way within Skinner's system to correct the misuse of power by the controller. Skinner has divided his world into higher and lower orders, and between the two there is an unbridgeable gap. The members of the lower orders are conditioned, not conditioning, men; creatures of automatic goodness, they behave properly not because they have an awareness of problems and make intelligent choices, but because they have no awareness and make no choices but do as they are required (have been conditioned) to do. How, then, can such men, who are not men but mindless beings, question the policies of the controllers? How can such robotlike creatures correct unwise or unworkable policies? If it be said that the controllers too are conditioned men, the response must surely be that they are conditioned, if conditioned at all, in a quite different way—not by other men, other controllers, but by contingencies that they have themselves made, in other words, by themselves. And while history may be said to teach many and diverse (perhaps inconsistent) things, there is one thing it teaches that transcends all reasonable doubt: namely, that the possession of power is dangerous (even if also useful) and that to guard against its wrongful uses is the first obligation of a responsible society.

To all this we must add: the great technical difficulties in planning a harmonious and efficient social order; the extraordinary qualities required in the men responsible for such planning (and it ought not to be forgotten

[21] *Beyond Freedom and Dignity,* pp. 182–83, 172.

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that Skinner's planning—both in range and intimate details—goes far beyond all hitherto known schemes for human control); and the fact that such planning must take place in ongoing, not *de novo* societies, populated by previously (and, from Skinner's standpoint, erroneously) conditioned men, passionately committed to the traditional and the familiar. We can see that the feasibility of his proposals rests on a morass of perplexities.

TAKE, FINALLY, Skinner's notion of a stable (though evolving) society. He does not mean by stability a static order, for central to his teaching is a program of deliberate change. But the changes he proposes have a particular purpose, to transform the existing order and bring into being a new culture. This new culture, once achieved, will approximate if not embody utopia. Hence, though it will continue to evolve, its evolution cannot be expected to admit major alterations. Tranquillity, or the removal of tension, and peace, or the removal (or near removal) of conflict, become the hallmark of Skinner's stable—and if not static, certainly not dynamic—society.

Would such a society really work? Is it even attainable? I do not believe so, and for two reasons primarily. One is psychological, turning on the tensions and discontents that always attend differences and inequalities. The other is structural, turning on the resentments and ambitions that always attach to hierarchy. Together these make for perpetual conflict and occasional rebellion, and require, therefore, a method of resolution appropriate to a turbulent rather than a tranquil society. Let us consider these points in turn.

One striking omission in Skinner's book is his failure to treat the problem of equality. He talks, to be sure, of differences, which he prefers to uniformity. But he does not confront the problems that emerge when men impute attributes of superiority or inferiority to these differences. There is, of course, no necessary reason for such imputations, any more than there would be if we were talking of the differences between an apple and an orange. But for thousands of years men have somehow believed that differences—whether of race, sex, religion, nationality, intelligence, talent, creativity, or any number of consequential and inconsequential things—do and should entail such judgments. Indeed, the striving for preeminence is so pervasive as to warrant the suspicion that inequality in *some* form is an abiding characteristic of the human condition.

I am arguing, that is to say, that by nature *and by inclination* men are *and want to be* different, that they associate differences with imputations of superiority and inferiority, and that if they can no longer hope to better themselves they seek to improve the status of their children.

From time to time, moreover, some men and groups see themselves as outside of (alienated from, often because they believe they are regarded as inferior to) the larger group of which they are allegedly a part. Thus, when a black man today says, "I have nothing in common with whites," we may deplore his statement as a betrayal of his humanity, but we cannot fail to recognize the reality (and intensity) of his belief (feeling). And when any man, black or white, resents the superior position held by another man, generally because he believes that the other man is no more and perhaps less deserving than he, we can regret or sympathize with his judgment, but we cannot, if we seek a stable society, ignore it. Skinner may tell us that beliefs and feelings and attitudes do not exist, that only relevant behavior counts. But the fact is that the behavior of such men draws upon such feelings and beliefs and can be understood only in terms of such attitudes. For Skinner to hold, therefore, that his controllers can both assign men to fixed tasks and also (through "operant conditioning") keep them there in some sort of cooperative action, is to flout all we know of human behavior.

As long, then, as differences and inequal-

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ities of some sort exist—and they will always exist—not tranquillity but tensions and discontents will constitute essential characteristics of the social order.

These reflections are reinforced when we consider the further problem of hierarchy. In modern industrial society, specialization of function and the division of labor are not matters of choice but technical necessities. Workers cannot be freely interchangeable. Differences of function entail inequalities of skill and (generally) productivity, and consequently inequalities of reward. Now if the ideal of equality of opportunity had been, or could be, fully realized—if all men had been, or could be, given the same opportunities to reach higher positions—men at various levels in the pyramid of hierarchical power and reward might feel no sense of injustice. But the reality, of course, is that this ideal has never been realized, and if we are to take seriously the Socratic teaching that equality of opportunity requires, among other things, that all children be taken from their parents immediately after birth and raised in common—and I see no other way to achieve complete equality of opportunity—it is unlikely that the ideal can ever be fulfilled. Even if, with Edward Bellamy, we look also to equality of income or reward, the problem of differentiated power and the touchy question of incentives (which has bedeviled even the "socialist" countries of our time) remain.

It follows, then, in the face of the heterogeneity in power, fame, reward, and the like, produced by hierarchical structures, that men at the lower levels will (as they do) resent their positions and strive in various ways to rise above them. They object, too, to the arbitrary rules (or what they take to be arbitrary rules) and the irresponsibility (lack of democratic accountability) of men at the higher levels of those pyramids. Whatever the merits of their complaints, certain facts are clear: that hierarchy makes for a variety of differences, that these differences entail a variety of inequalities, and these inequalities produce not merely a variety of tensions but also a striving for betterment that cannot (Skinner notwithstanding) be programmed out of existence.

What is true of hierarchies in the industrial sphere is true of hierarchies in other areas of society, e.g., the political, the religious, the educational. The difficulties—the resentments, tensions, conflicts, strivings—are thus all-pervasive. How implausible, then, is the extraordinary remark by Skinner's alter ego, the psychologist Frazier in *Walden Two:* "We simply arrange a world in which serious conflicts occur as seldom as possible or, with a little luck, not at all." Conflicts will be absent only in a world where men have ceased to be human, where they have been converted into robots and are consequently "automatically good"; or in an entirely just world populated by entirely just men, which is to say, Heaven. But as Lucifer demonstrated, not even the most perfect ruler can order the continuance of perfection.

Skinner's recipe—conditioned virtue—is both ineffectual and destructive. Ineffectual, because it cannot eliminate the conflicts that endanger the stability of a state. Destructive because, in seeking only to eliminate those conflicts, it provides no mechanism by which to contain them when they erupt. Thus Skinner's theory not merely invites the rebellions of the lower orders; it ensures that those rebellions, when they occur, will be unmanageable.

V

Two considerations more than any others seem to underlie the idea of a closed society: that the truth is known and that it can and should govern human societies. Both are demonstrably false.

The truth is not known, at least not the whole truth. Always we know only a fraction of what there is to be known; always the things we do not know vastly exceed the things we know; hence we cannot be sure

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that we know even what we think we know. We act, of course, on the basis of what we think we know, and we must do so. But action dictated by faith or circumstance or limited (because partial) understanding is a far cry from absolute knowledge.

Since *the* truth is not known, it follows (as Mill argued) that men must be free to inquire into the validity of conflicting claims to truth. The alternative is the imposition of an alleged truth on the ground that power is rightfully employed in a true cause. But whether that cause is a true cause is precisely what is at issue. Hence domination not merely evades the issue of truth, it corrupts the process by which it might be ascertained.

What is distressing about Skinner, who is presumably committed to scientific method, is that he not only claims to know the truth, or enough of it to warrant the conviction that in time he will embrace it all, but wants the power to preclude the possibility of anyone ever again challenging that truth, or the men who implement it.

From this point of view, it is less important to argue that Skinner is wrong in his conception of what human nature (or behavior) is, than it is to argue that uncertainty is the first condition of rational thought, and that whatever one's conviction about his own or another person's ideas, it is never legitimate to hold that those ideas are beyond criticism. For the moment Skinner is content to meet this requirement, as is evidenced by his participation in public discussions of his work. But the logic of his position is such that should he obtain the power to put his ideas into practice, those ideas and that power could not be reversed. If he can do what he claims to be able to do, and if he has the power to do it, then men conditioned by his methods will no longer be capable—as they are now—to make the free choice to reject his system. This irreversibility converts Skinner and his controllers into authoritarian, oligarchical men.

This authoritarianism, inherent in Skinner's thought, should come as no surprise to a reader of *Walden Two*. There Skinner has Frazier say:

> The government of Walden Two has the virtues of democracy, but none of the defects. . . . We have no election campaigns to falsify issues or obscure them with emotional appeals, but a careful study of the satisfaction of the membership is made. Every member has a direct channel through which he may protest to the Managers or even the Planners. And these protests are taken as seriously as the pilot of an airplane takes a sputtering engine. We don't need laws and a police force to compel a pilot to pay attention to a defective engine. Nor do we need laws to compel our Dairy Manager to pay attention to an epidemic among his cows.
>
> Let's not stop with democracy. It isn't, and can't be, the best form of government, because it's based on a scientifically invalid conception of man. It fails to take account of the fact that in the long run *man is determined by the state*.[22]

And if one should wonder what is entailed by channels of protest and studies of satisfaction of the membership, Frazier explains that Walden Two has effectively controlled the *inclination* to behave; that through a wise choice of techniques what has been increased is the *feeling* of freedom; and that in any case a social structure has been built "which will satisfy the needs of everyone and in which everyone will want to observe the supporting code."

Skinner underscores these points in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* when, to avert possible misunderstanding, he says: "People who get along together well under the mild contingencies of approval and disapproval are controlled as effectively as (and in many ways more effectively than) the citizens of a police state."

Thus Skinner moves, not simply "beyond" (by which he means "short of") freedom

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[22] *Walden Two* (paperback ed.), pp. 269, 273. Italics in the original.

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and dignity, but "beyond" ("short of") science and rationality. He moves "beyond" science in that he removes his system and the men who operate it from the self-corrective controls of experience. One of the great merits of democracy is that it can provide an effective mechanism through which those who live under a system are able to inform the rulers of their experiences under that system. But this information is worthless if it has been prearranged. Nor is it consequential if it enters only as a petition or prayer, dependent for its reception on the arbitrary will of the ruler. But in Skinner's system, apart from an individual's presumed capacity to reveal his suffering as a cow reveals its affliction or an engine its defect, there is no way for a citizen to express his discomfort or to compel a change in its cause.

Skinner moves "beyond" rationality in that he does not understand the limits of reason in politics. It is a truism that in politics *the* truth, in whatever measure known, does not wholly govern men. There is a certain recalcitrance in human nature, a grim resistance to the surrender of one's habits and prejudices, a love for what is, a commitment to people and places and possessions. What *can* be done is vastly different from what a scientist-king believes *ought* to be done. This is why Aristotle carefully distinguished theoretical wisdom (knowledge of the truly good) from practical wisdom (knowledge of what is possible in a given situation). Totalitarian rulers, not knowing or indifferent to this distinction, resorted to terror in the abortive attempt to achieve their unattainable ends. Similarly, Skinner, who would use the carrot rather than the whip, requires manipulation (a form of coercion in that it violates man's autonomy) to pursue his stated objectives, and would put that manipulation outside the reaches of popular control. All of which becomes particularly irrational when we understand that many problems are not capable of permanent solution at all.

I mean here no more than that, where diversity and thus conflict are permanent features of the human condition, it is necessary to provide not "a" solution but a method that will admit of continuing (and at best partial) resolutions. This is why Mill and other writers in the liberal tradition have stressed the crucial importance of democracy and the open society, from which there emerges a certain conception of dignity, embodied in the rights of man.

Among these rights three are of such importance that they merit special emphasis: the right to be wrong; the right to be Left; and the right to be left alone.

It is often said that while every man has a right to speak as he may please, it should please him to speak only what is right and good; for no man should wish to utter false or wicked things. He has a right to be right, but not to be wrong. This is pernicious doctrine. He who claims to know what is right and true and good really asserts no more than that he thinks he knows. Even if he does know, he knows not by authority—for as Hobbes remarked, when a man says that God spoke to him in a dream he is really saying he dreamed God spoke to him—but by observation and reasoning. As these were open to him, so they must be open to other men.

It is also often said that men should not disturb accepted traditions and practices, especially since (as would be the case if Skinner's policies prevailed) they are the "right" practices. What is most objectionable here is the notion that conformity and tranquillity are the noblest of virtues. One need not insist that all traditions and practices are wrong in order to insist on the right to question them. The right to be Left is the right to point out derangements and propose remedies. The right to be Left denies that tranquillity is the highest achievement of the human race.

Finally, the right to be left alone. It is often said that what liberalism lacks is a sense of and respect for community, that it sets men apart in isolation from each other

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and thereby deprives them of their brotherhood. This is surely a tawdry caricature, both of Mill and other liberals (Russell, MacIver, Dewey, Cohen, etc.). Man does not and cannot exist apart from community. Community forms him, gives him his substance and identity. What liberals contend is that community is a necessary and ennobling reality, but not the only or complete reality. Individuality is a reality, and a value, too. Men must be given room for their own differentiation. To realize oneself as a unique person, a man must in some measure be left alone.

Nor does this mean that he will be the straw man Skinner attacks—a fully autonomous creature. There is no such thing as a completely free and autonomous man. What autonomy means in the real world is not freedom from all restraints, not the denial of socialization (some "conditioning"), but the insistence that where an individual's practices do not militate against the interests of others, his mode of life has a privileged claim to respect. Where his actions do not directly violate the welfare and interests of others, he should be left undisturbed.

We live, in some respects, in a deranged world. Through accident and design, men have been divided into higher and lower orders. But it is not written in the stars that those at the bottom are forever destined to reside there, or were properly put there initially. The right system, the only just system, must have as its prerequisite a mechanism that will enable the lower orders not merely to reach out for their legitimate higher claims but actually to attain them. Equality in all things is an impossible goal. But equality in crucial things is a reasonable goal. What those crucial things are is properly a matter of dispute. Hence men must be free to discuss and resolve that dispute. In this at least they must be equal. Such freedom and such equality are the core of what we mean by dignity. The "right" human objective, then, is not to move beyond freedom and dignity but to secure them.

VI

Despite all that has been said here, some sensitive and idealistic persons have found in Skinner's theory a plausible answer to their concerns. Why is this so?

(1) Clearly, they do not see in that theory and its explanatory account anything markedly different from what they conceive American practices already to be. In their view, America is not a liberal or democratic state but a society ruled by hidden elites. These elites condition us now—through controlled "information" from the government and mass media, through authoritative indoctrination from the churches and schools, through programmed advertising from the controllers of Madison Avenue. This conditioning works. It has produced a conformist culture made up of one-dimensional men.

The choice before us, therefore, is not between programming and the absence of programming but between two kinds of programming—that of Skinner and that of hidden elites. It is not a choice between two ideal types—authoritarian rule and democracy; but between two realities—the benevolent authoritarianism of Skinner's scientist-kings and the inchoate (and wicked) authoritarianism of the political-military-industrial complex. Indeed, they do not even take Skinner's controllers to be scientist-kings or authoritarians at all; rather, the controllers (as Skinner has repeatedly emphasized) are themselves controlled men, they are like us, of us. Hence their programming is more likely to be "right."

(2) They are attracted as much by Skinner's methods as by his promised results. Some see him as he sees himself, as a humanist, "one of those who, because of the environment to which he has been exposed, is concerned for the future of mankind." [23] Others (rejecting his world outlook) are at-

[23] Skinner, "Humanism and Behaviorism," p. 20. This queer definition may help to explain the incredible designation of Skinner as "Humanist of the Year" for 1972!

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tracted by his techniques, which they see as improved shortcuts of technological manipulation that may be used to achieve their own ideological ends.

It is a grim fact, they note, that good ends are not always attainable by good means. If economic development is to take place in the "backward" nations, for example, despotic rather than democratic rule may be required. If children are to be taught mathematics, language, and "right" principles, authoritarian rather than democratic methods may be the more effective. And if good men are to realize their right causes in a world where persuasion, addressed to previously conditioned (and therefore unreceptive) men, can never be effective, Skinnerian techniques may be the only device to break the bonds of conformity.

(3) They are bemused, then, by the quest for certainty. Like Hobbes, they want peace and tranquillity and a commodious life, and they believe that Skinner will help to provide these. Here many correctly sense what Skinner himself does not see: that Skinner is essentially a mystic, not a scientists or behaviorist at all. What drives Skinner, and what attracts them to Skinner, is his faith—not in reason, or science, or scientists, or even that limited breed of scientists known as behaviorist psychologists, but in a sort of Invisible Hand that will transcend environmental determinism to control the environment that controls us, and in that way lead us to utopia. And Skinner's utopia, like all utopias, cannot be said to be harmful or wrong, for how can one criticize what does not exist and never has? There are no imperfections, no meannesses, no inequities, in Skinner's world. We cannot disprove empirically what is not yet real. His hypothetical utopia, like all mystical systems, is invulnerable to criticism.[24]

This fascination with utopia must not be minimized. For well over two millennia men have been gripped by the Socratic portrayal of an ideal Republic ruled by philosopher-kings. Bacon's *New Atlantis* anticipated much present-day disillusionment with philosophy by putting scientists at the helm instead. What Skinner does is to plumb the hearts of those who want freedom but do not want to make choices, who want to *feel* free but not to *be* free, by giving them what they want (or will want after proper conditioning) while absolving them of all the burdens —the fears, uncertainties, and responsibilities—of decision-making. He offers them a royal road to salvation—led and controlled by behaviorist scientist-kings.

Similarly, we must not mistake the profound appeal of the doctrine of environmental determinism. Listen again to Skinner:

> Do I mean to say that Plato never discovered the mind? Or that Aquinas, Descartes, Locke, and Kant were preoccupied with incidental, often irrelevant by-products of human behavior? Or that the mental laws of physiological psychologists like Wundt, or the stream of consciousness of William James, or the mental apparatus of Sigmund Freud have no useful place in the understanding of human behavior? Yes, I do. And I put the matter strongly because, if we are to solve the problems that face us in the world today, this concern for mental life must no longer divert our attention from the environmental conditions of which human behavior is a function.[25]

Here, at one stroke, Skinner imputes responsibility for our many problems not merely to all the thinkers who have preceded him but to the fact that they exercised "thought" at all. Skinner thus presents himself as a humble, not an arrogant man. It is not *his* "mind" that is superior to theirs. It is rather the environment that is above us all. The "evil," the weakness, the fallibility in man—these are not the products of man's will, or of his "nature," but of an uncontrolled environment that makes us what we

[24] Cf. Neil Postman, "My Ivan Illich Problem," *Social Policy*, January–February 1972, p. 35.

[25] "Humanism and Behaviorism," p. 19.

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are. Control the environment and you control the conditions of life; control the conditions of life and you control man.

(4) It follows, paradoxically, that Skinner appeals precisely to those who would argue men should not be governed by forces outside their own control. That, he contends, is how they are governed now—with catastrophic results. Consequently, with the help of science, men who wish to be ("feel") free must seize control of those external forces (the environment) which determine their behavior in order that they may themselves determine that behavior "correctly." Not to control the environment is in fact to surrender to the forces that now control them.

Doubtless there are further reasons for Skinner's widespread appeal, but these may be sufficient to suggest why that appeal is widespread, and why the grounds that sustain it appear so plausible.

IT IS POINTLESS to repeat here the considerations I have already advanced to show that *all* of these interpretations of Skinner are either erroneous, in that they mistake Skinner's teaching, or warrant condemnation, in that they lead to harmful results. A few additional remarks, however, may be in order.

(1) Skinner's system *is* markedly different from current American practices in at least two major respects: it substitutes for the present conditioning from a variety of uncoordinated sources a carefully coordinated and univocal pattern of conditioning; and it substitutes for the present reality of imperfect democracy an ideal or perfect, because total, system of authoritarian rule.

It may or may not be true that America is governed rather than merely (or widely) permeated by "hidden elites." But to the extent that it is true those elites are not merely many, they are often discordant and opposed. They are also specific rather than general, in the sense that while an elite may dominate a realm of activity at a particular time, it does not dominate all sectors of the society always. It is contested by other elites, and it depends for its success on its ability to win the support of the masses. And where elites compete for mass support, that support is forthcoming only where the masses can exact a price in return. To this extent at least, the masses do choose. A particular elite does not always ascend to power, as business elites have learned to their discomfiture in the age of the welfare state, and as labor elites learned in the age of capitalism and are still learning in the age of the mixed economy. In Skinner's system, however, the masses never choose; a particular elite always governs.

The very fact that Skinner is free to prescribe wholesale remedies for change; even more, the fact that he believes those remedies not only should but can be implemented —these testify to the relative openness of existing arrangements, both in ideas and political practices. It is all too clear that under his system there can be no opposing ideas, indeed no "ideas" at all, and no political instruments for change counter to the will of his new ruling class.

(2) Skinner is not a humanist, for he dehumanizes man. No less important, in scorning process for results, he deprecates humanistic values in the procedures he advocates.

I know it is fashionable, today as always, for men convinced of the rightness of their cause to become impatient with and ultimately to reject the tedious delays and inevitable compromises that emerge from formal rules of consultation, bargaining, and popular acquiescence. They want not "right" procedures but "right" results; hence they are prepared to jettison those procedures when they do not get what they want.

This is the principle of oligarchy, a principle that respects "superior" minds and is contemptuous of the "inferior." But it is not a principle consistent with humanism. In the humanist conception, all men require opportunities for education and growth, all men count. To neglect their judgments, to

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impose the judgment of an allegedly superior will, is to diminish their humanity. And if it is the business of a people to correct the errors of government, procedures that enable them to criticize, to participate, and effectively to remove rulers are vital.

The bad-means/good-ends relationship accepted by Skinner's devotees is equally dangerous. This is of course the ancient problem of "dirty hands," the notion that good men may have to do unjust things in order to achieve just goals. But this is a false and pernicious statement of the problem. If a particular means is *necessary* to the achievement of a "good" end, such means—even though it may entail painful acts, such as the surgical removal of a leg to save a man's life, or the resort to war to save a people from Nazi barbarism—cannot be condemned. Means and ends are never to be judged in disjunction. They must always be taken together and assessed in terms of the total situation.

From this perspective, despotism for the advancement of "backward" peoples and authoritarian techniques for the improvement of children have little or no relevance for what Mill called mature and enlightened peoples. It is even questionable whether despotism will "advance" a "backward" people rather than more effectively bind it in subjection, or whether authoritarian controls will "educate" children rather than turn them into mechanical beings. Certainly, the ineffectiveness of Chinese "brainwashing" lends little support to the notion that modern techniques of conditioning can effectively re-educate men.[26] It requires more than a little faith to believe that Skinner's conditioning of rats, pigeons, infants, and retardates proves his ability to condition mature adults.

(3) Skinner is indeed a mystic, and his utopia is much to be feared. Utopia, to be sure, has always appealed to men conscious of the injustices of an existing order and attracted to an ideal commonwealth where disharmony and inequity no longer prevail. But this is not the lot of men. Utopias of whatever kind are always rooted in a rigid authoritarian mold. This is because the new system, being perfect (or nearly perfect), cannot admit of change lest it lose its perfection. Utopias are thus static societies, and men within them, frozen into higher and lower orders, are soon frustrated and bored. The impulse to change cannot be eliminated, for while men have limited needs they have unlimited wants; but if suppressed, that impulse will assume unorthodox and revolutionary forms. Hence the inevitable dilemma of utopia: to assure the maintenance of its perfect arrangements, it must preclude orderly processes of change; by precluding those processes, it only facilitates the emergence of other, disorderly, and (probably) violent social movements. The reality of utopia becomes the death of utopia.

Like Plato, whom he oddly dismisses, Skinner believes that knowledge—*his* knowledge—is virtue; that *his* understanding of human behavior will lead always to the "right" controls, the "right" results. He should hearken instead to the words of sanity uttered by a madman:

> Knowledge and pain go together. The more we know, the greater our despair. The more we advance, the more we clash with the immensity of evil. . . . Not all your scientists put together could guarantee the serenity of a single human being.[27]

Skinner looks to external (environmental) forces as determining the nature (behavior) of men. But the curious fact (I must repeat) is that if his notion of environmental determinism is correct, Skinner *cannot* bring about the changes he prescribes. If we are what we are because of deterministic forces outside our control, we *cannot* become other

[26] Cf. Robert Jay Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963); see also Edgar H. Schein, *Coercive Persuasion* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961).

[27] From Elie Wiesel, *A Beggar in Jerusalem*, trans. L. Edelman and E. Wiesel (New York: Random House, 1970; Avon paperback, 1971), p. 52.

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than what we are or are destined to become. To be other than we are, to become other than what we are already destined to become, we would have to control the environment that controls us. But if *it* controls us, we cannot control *it*. Hence Skinner's proposal is self-defeating.

To put this another way: If Skinner's goal is survival of the culture, and if survival requires that his controllers gain power, then his doctrine of environmental determinism precludes their getting that power and hence of providing for that survival. To get that power they would have to break the chains of environmental determinism. The logic of Skinner's theory makes it impossible for them to do this, though Skinner curiously believes that they can and should do this. If they can do it, despite his theory, then his theory is wrong: the environment does not deterministically control men. And if they can do it, we are back of course to the ethical question: survival for what? Why is X culture—*our* culture—worthy of survival? Why is it more worthy of survival than Y or Z (*their*) cultures? Indeed, given a deterministic doctrine, in what sense can it be said that we choose survival at all? It is really no answer to say, as Skinner said in a television broadcast (October 17, 1971): "We do not choose survival as a value. It chooses us." For if it chooses us, we need neither Skinner nor his concerns; all will be done despite him or ourselves.

(4) To avoid being governed by forces outside their own control, Skinner would have men seize control of their environment. But which men? If Skinner's controllers, the new men of the higher orders, in what sense can men of the lower orders be said to control? Clearly, whether the environment controls men, or Skinner's controllers control the environment that controls men, the bulk of mankind remains subjects, not citizens. A citizen is one who rules and is ruled; a subject is only ruled. In Skinner's world there are rulers and subjects. There is, in this relationship, no significant difference between the current world as Skinner depicts it and the world he would create. The future world is not better or worse than the present world; it is fundamentally the same. But to the extent that the actual world is different from the world he depicts, what he envisions is decidedly worse; for to turn citizens into subjects is effectively to bind them to governments and forces he would set permanently outside their own control.

VII

A final word: No credit or blame should attach to Skinner for the achievements or failures of *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, or of his life's work. Clearly, these are the products of external circumstance, the environment, over which as a determinist he can have had little or no control. For the same reason, no credit or blame should attach to this writer for what is said here, or to the reader for his reactions. As Skinner would be the first to insist, both writer and reader are also behaving only as they must. If, then, none of us is an autonomous man, if none of us is responsible for what we do and say, what is the point of writing, reading, reflecting upon, or talking about this book? □

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More on Working-Class Authoritarianism

Editor:

A letter by S. M. Lipset in the Winter 1973 DISSENT mentions some work of mine. He says that he "never understood what relevance Hamilton's research on the correlates of opinion on war has to my work."

There is really no exuse for his not knowing. The matter was discussed at length in an earlier exchange. In an article three years ago I presented evidence showing that educated, upper-middle-class Americans tended to favor a "hard line" in foreign affairs and that persons of lower status and education preferred more moderate policies. In this connection I mentioned Lipset's work and indicated that these results ran contrary to his "working-class authoritarianism" argument.

Lipset responded with a letter of complaint saying he had "never related the effect of education or class to foreign-policy concerns. . . ."

My reply read as follows:

"Professor Lipset's present claim . . . is not true. In the first pages of this chapter on working-class authoritarianism he presents a long quotation from a "Short Talk with a Fascist Beast" which he says "portrays graphically the ideological syndrome. . . ." One entire paragraph (of three) is given to this casual laborer's enthusiasm for the Soviet Union's 1956 action in Hungary, an action which he compared with the weakness of British policy in Cyprus. On the following page Lipset makes a contrast between what once appeared to be the case (the parties of middle and upper classes supporting "jingoistic foreign policies") and what presumably is now the case (working-class groups in some nations being "the most nationalistic sector of the population"). At a later point, in a key formulation, we find this statement: ". . . when liberalism is defined in noneconomic terms—as support of civil liberties, internationalism, etc.— . . . [the] more well-to-do are more liberal, the poorer are more intolerant." At a still later point Lipset summarizes Eysenck's research on the "tough-" and "tender-minded," the latter being described as "tolerant of deviation, unprejudiced, and internationalist." He then proceeds to indicate the relationship with class.

It seems to me that Lipset did assert a relationship between class and foreign-policy attitudes and, specifically, claimed that the workers are the toughs. It also seems to me completely appropriate to present evidence on the question and to point out the implication for the Lipset claim.

The point about *his* "complex multivariate arguments" was also discussed in this previous correspondence. All the above quotations from Lipset, it will be noted, involve "simple two variable relationships." There is no "complex multivariate" argument at all in those contexts. Nor was there any letter in his text where he offered new evidence. He did rise to the presentation of *three* variable tables at a couple of points, but he never offered the complex multivariate analysis that he demands of his critics.

The quotations he offers in his present letter are asides, hedges really. They are never integrated into the main line of his argument.

For those interested, this correspondence appears in the *Revue française de sociologie*, January–March 1970.

RICHARD HAMILTON □

Of Things Past

Editor:

Irving Howe's generous but challenging review of my book, *American Communism in Crisis: 1943–1957*, broaches the problem of what today's democratic Left shall make of earlier radical movements, in this instance the American Communist party under Earl Browder's leadership, which at one and the same time achieved a real impact and authenticity and yet was flawed by terrible crimes, stemming from a supine self-involvement with Stalinism.

Howe believes that I make "too much of the 'autonomous' possibilities of Browderism," and he brings to bear on this point an article in the Spring 1972 *Survey* wherein Philip Jaffe offers some unusual revelations about his long-time, intimate friend, Earl Browder. Howe finds I did not have Jaffe's "startling" revelations, either because of ignorance or discretion.

On the facts, let the following be added up: Jaffe's disclosure that Browder was in the fall of 1939 in radio contact with Dimitroff in Moscow who validated the CP's turn to isolationism is reported in my book on p. 214. In the footnote, I credit Browder himself with the fact. He must have been Jaffe's source as well.

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As for Browder's volunteering of documents to the Department of Justice to be used against the American Trotskyists indicted under the Smith Act in 1941—which Howe properly calls a "shameful act, worthy of stool pigeons"—it is true that I did not have the documents which Jaffe has evidently guarded all this while. But on pp. 46–47 of my own book, reference is made to this episode as a haunting one, and I say that "the Stalinists cheered the government on. They supported the prosecution of political opponents on charges which, when used against themselves, they would denounce as without substance." And I continue that "failure to make civil liberties a principle, the failure to abide by principled behavior, cost the Communists dearly." I did not know that Browder's communications with FDR contained warnings against a variety of liberal, and radical, social democratic figures, including important independent journals because of their refusal to endorse the labor-draft-law bills of 1945. One footnote, on p. 250, does mention Browder's private papers, now at the University of Syracuse, as revealing a conflict in this regard between the UE, a Communist-led union, and the *Daily Worker*.

As to Jaffe's tidbits that Duclos probably never wrote the April 1945 article attacking Browder, and that Duclos was himself accused at the first Cominform meeting in September 1947 of the "revisionism" earlier leveled at Browder, much of this will be found in my detailed analysis of the Duclos article. The French accepted publicly the Yugoslav critique of their wartime and end-of-the war behavior; the secret details of the meeting itself have long been available to all scholars (this is where Jaffe got them) in the book by Eugenio Reale, one of the Italian Communist delegates, entitled *Avec Jacques Duclos au Banc des Accuses* (Paris: Mondadori, 1958).

As to Howe's judgment that the above revelations suggest that Jaffee may be more hard-headed than myself in judging Browder's behavior or "independence" of Moscow, I am inclined to enter a "nolo contendere." No great compulsion moves me to argue with Jaffe about anything. The argument with Irving Howe is, however, an intellectual pleasure. My book has serious faults, in retrospect, which stem from a failure to deal with the larger questions of a democratic socialist perspective in our country, for example, in the sense that DISSENT has done all along and that Michael Harrington does in his book *Socialism*. But I doubt whether its faults lie in my treatment of Browder. And I wonder whether Howe's older and understandable hang-ups are not getting the better of him.

Basically, my feeling is that Browder was on the right track for the wrong reasons. The important plane of inquiry does not lie in Browder's personal-political shortcomings (which are undeniable), which the book makes plain in tracing his strange gyrations; nor is there any doubt at all that he was throughout a creature of the Comintern (with all this implies). But this struggle to go to the outer limits of an all-encompassing and suffocating doctrine, his attempt to create a genuine movement in the face of the limitations of his allegiances and motivations, the way the CP in his time tried to break through its own contradictions can, I believe, be granted as important. It is possible to say B, without denying A. To argue about A at this late date, when Howe has surely won the argument long ago seems unnecessary to me. But to deny B, namely, the historically very interesting and (for today's issues very relevant) quest of one wing of American radicalism to grasp the imperatives of a non-Leninist path and to grasp that the war had changed the terrain of the battle seems to me unhistorical. I am by no means inclined to underestimate "the all-encompassing context of Stalinism as a total ideological movement." But the drama of the matter lies in the attempt of heretics within the limits of their doctrine to burst beyond it, all the while trying to be loyal to it. *Hic Rhodus, hic salta,* as one of the many Karl Marxes would have said.

JOSEPH R. STAROBIN

IRVING HOWE *replies:*

When Joseph Starobin writes that "Browder was on the right track for the wrong reasons," by inclination is to respond: yes, but when the reasons are so wrong, what does that do to the track? Again: was Browder really a heretic when leading the CP or when expelled from it? I doubt it. Yet I wouldn't deny that there were released through "Browderism" some heretical currents vis à vis Stalinism.

Joe Starobin and I don't disagree so much as we approach the past from our very different backgrounds. He sees "Browderism" as an anticipation of his own development *away* from the Communist movement; I see it as a phase within the development *of* the Communist movement. As for who, if either of us, is right, or more right, let others judge. □

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On Crime

Editor:

While it may well be true that a white, racist society "dumps" on its black citizens, tending to nudge them toward actions which, if and when exposed, land them in prisons, to state, as does Jeremy Larner (in "To Speak of Black Violence" DISSENT, Winter 1973), that "Jackson [was] imprisoned at the age of 18 for a $70 holdup," is so far from the whole truth as to be an un-truth.

Yes, indeed, George Jackson was imprisoned (indeterminate sentence) for a "$70 holdup." But Mr. Larner fails to point out—in spite of much publicity to the contrary—that the holdup was an *armed* holdup, and represented Mr. Jackson's *third felony conviction.*

Now, I grant you that much harm is done to our black brethren by what may well be a largely racist, white society. However, we all deserve equal protection under the law, and a three-time loser by the age of 18 (or, indeed, any age, yes?) evidences little suggestion that he will make contributions to the general safety.

Mr. Larner, keep up the good work. But please tell the whole truth.

DONALD PURETZ

JEREMY LARNER *replies:*

I thank Mr. Puretz for the additional information. I did not mean to imply that under the circumstances it was unreasonable to have imprisoned Jackson at all. Nor do I believe, as I indicated, that we will ever know the full story of his continued incarceration. But perhaps Mr. Puretz will agree that Jackson's desperate ideology and his involvement in further violence within prison walls were very likely related to the treatment he received from jailers and parole boards. □

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Newsletter of
THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Edited by **Michael Harrington**

Will the Nixon Seventies be a replay of the Eisenhower Fifties, a time of American celebration and cynicism about social change? That is how Nixon interprets the mandate of November 1972. That, alas, is what some who speak in the name of a disillusioned liberalism think, sounding retreat, explaining why we cannot solve our urgent crises.

We refuse to retreat. Despite what happened in 1972—and in some ways because of it—we are convinced that it is possible to win this nation to a bold democratic Left program.

That is why we are starting the NEWSLETTER OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT. We believe that the activists in the unions, in the Democratic Party, and in the issue-oriented organizations require a monthly that will reflect and report on their struggles.

The NEWSLETTER will appear ten times a year (monthly, except for July and August). The lead article in Volume I, Number 1 is entitled

THE LEFT WING OF REALISM

Here are a few excerpts:

"America urgently needs a program of the democratic Left. It is preposterous to think, as the neoconservative refugees from the Left now argue, that the nation's problems will be solved if only we aspire less.

"America urgently needs a united movement of the democratic Left. This is not the time for purges, either of the McGovern forces because of their failure in 1972 or of the partisans of George Meany who so wrongly sat out that race. This is the time to begin to build a new American majority for social change that can win big in the congressional elections of 1974 and take the White House in 1976. . . . it was an enormous merit of the McGovern campaign that it placed the issue of income redistribution on the national agenda and attacked the scandalous preferences given to unearned income. Now cynics say that was nothing but a summer storm. We disagree. . . .

". . . We know that Keynesian policies can take an underutilized economy and make it grow. But can we continue to assume that if only Washington primes the pump, the private market will provide the best mechanism for a social allocation of the Gross National Product? We think not. We think that liberals must now discuss going beyond liberalism."

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